

No. 69 • SCIENCE FICTION • HORROR • FANTASY • ANIMATION • SPFX • 95p

STARBLURST



AN INTERVIEW WITH **STEPHEN KING** AUTHOR OF

Christine

PLUS...

THE RETURN OF TARZAN IN

GREYSTOKE

AN INTERVIEW WITH

**DAVID
CRONENBERG**

THE ORIGINAL VIDEO-NASTY?

PEEPING TOM



...AND

WE VISIT THE FIRST EVER

**BELGIAN FANTASY
FILM FESTIVAL**

THE FUTURE RE-VISITED IN

"2084"

AN ON-SET REPORT

ON MICHAEL WINNER'S

SCREAM FOR HELP



"Me Jane"

GREYSTOKE, LEGEND OF TARZAN



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STARBURST™

STARBURST LETTERS 4

The censorship debate continues to rage, along with a defence of Six of One (The Prisoner Fan Club) and other readers' raves, and roastings.

THINGS TO COME 6

News 'n' such from around the world, gathered together by our roving reporter of the fantastic, Tony Crawley

TWILIGHT ZONE COMPETITION RESULTS 10

At Last! We finally got around to judging the Twilight Zone Contest - were you a winner? Coming soon, The Disney Contest results

STEPHEN KING ON CHRISTINE 12

A mini-interview with America's Master of the Macabre on the film version of his newest book, Christine.



REVIEW: CHRISTINE 15

John Brosnan was among the media folk at the preview screening of Christine and liked what he saw.

BELGIAN FILM FESTIVAL 16

Veteran Festival Survivor Tony Crawley braves the horrors at Belgium's first Fantasy Film Festival... so how come Britain doesn't have one? Do we have to do EVERYTHING?

THE CRONENBERG TAPES: PART I 20

Starburst talks to Canadian cult director David Cronenberg about his bizarre shocker, Videodrome.



PREVIEW: TARZAN 24

A lightning colour picture preview of the latest version of the Tarzan legend, courtesy of director Hugh Hudson and "Ape-man" Rick Baker

SCREAM FOR HELP 26

Alan Jones reports from the set of the new thriller from Michael Winner, Scream for Help

STARBURST HORROR CLASSIC 31

We turn the clock back 25 years to 1959 and the release of Michael Powell's much-loved 'psycho-on-the-loose' movie, Peeping Tom

PREVIEW: 2084 34

Starburst reports on the pre-production of a new science fiction film from the talented director of The Sender, Roger Christian

STARBURST REVIEW SECTION

FILMS 38

Alan Jones logs in with reviews of The Right Stuff, a dramatic account of the American Space Program, and Amityville 3D



VIDEOS 40

All the tape that's fit to view - and an awful lot that isn't. All you need is endurance and nerves of steel, and Barry Forshaw's got both!

TV ZONE 42

Richard Holliss reports on a new sf tv series from Denmark, Crash, which boasts special effects by Britain's own Bill Pearson.

IT'S ONLY A MOVIE 43

John Brosnan's monthly diatribe covers William Goldman's new book on scriptwriting in Hollywood and rakes over the coals of video censorship anew.

BOOK WORLD 45

Chris Charles reviews the latest from horror book star Peter Straub while newcomer Geoff Simm turns his critical attentions to the new book on David Cronenberg, The Shape of Rage.

STARBURST DATA BANK 46

The good Doctor answers your queries on everything from Jamie Lee Curtis to where to buy the makeup the special effects men use.

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CLASSIC SUGGESTION

... How about having *The Exorcist* as one of your *Starburst Classics*, as it's supposedly one of the best horror movies of all time?

And what happened to the *Starburst Annual* and poster magazines? How about bringing them back? Please? Anyway I look forward to your future issues and I will continue to support your sister magazine, *Doctor Who*, for a long time to come.

Richard Gregg,
High Wycombe,
Bucks.

Well guessed, Richard. The *Exorcist* feature promised a couple of months back is indeed well and truly in the works, and should be coming your way in the next couple of issues. As to the *Annuals* and poster mags, the poor *Starburst/Doctor Who* team are having to make do with just two hours sleep a night as it is... Ye assistant Ed Roger P. hasn't seen his dear old mum in months. Mind you, there has been some talk of doing *Starburst Summer* and *Winter Specials* instead. If enough readers show an interest, we'll do 'em.

TV TIME

Before anyone starts complaining that Channel 4 will ruin *The Outer Limits* if it gets its hands on the series, let's take a look at the BBC's presentation of *The Twilight Zone*. The episodes appear to be complete - but I thought Rod Serling always made a personal appearance at the beginning of every episode. In the BBC presentation, there's been no sign of him, only his voice. And no episode title cards. Are you sure the BBC prints are uncut?

Now, about that *Prisoner* piece (didn't I see a similar article in *Time Out* or *City Limits*, recently?) Firstly, you printed a couple of photos of McGoochan in reverse, his parting's on the wrong side. I know it's an occupational hazard for photo editors, but you could try a little harder. Secondly, the road along which the mobile room travels is the A20 not the M1. You may say the difference is irrelevant, but not if you happen to be taking your driving test. Thirdly, McGoochan does appear briefly at the end of "Do Not Forsake Me". Fourthly, your *Episode Guide* fails to mention that Peter Swannick as The Supervisor was the third regular cast member - that's 'cause you didn't notice, isn't it? He only appears with McGoochan and Angelo Muscat in the opening minutes of "Fall Out". Fifthly, with all this palaver about the show's running order, you still couldn't get it right yourself! Now I don't know what the original running order was and I've never seen an episode guide which listed it correctly (if you think that's a contradiction then you're not paying attention), but the following order seems to make sense:

1. Arrival; 2. Checkmate; 3. Free For

Starburst LETTERS

Send all your comments and criticisms to:
Starburst Letters, Starburst Magazine,
Marvel Comics Ltd., 23 Redan Place,
London W2 4SA, United Kingdom.



Max Von Sydow as The Exorcist. Look out for a special feature on this classic film coming your way in *Starburst* soon.

All; 4. Chimes of Big Ben; 5. The Schizoid Man; 6. Dance of the Dead; 7. Many Happy Returns; 8. The General; 9. A, B and C; 10. A Change of Mind; 11. It's Your Funeral; 12. Hammer into Anvil; 13. Do Not Forsake Me; 14. The Girl Who Was Death; 15. Living in Harmony; 16. Once Upon a Time; 17. Fall Out.

Any comments?

Incidentally, I wonder how many people noticed that the opening music was remixed for each episode so that it never sounds exactly the same for any two? Very clever, very subtle, and very expensive, I shouldn't wonder.

I liked the *Avengers* articles but I hope you'll extend the episode guide to include the Thorson episodes...

Lee Mendham,
Chatham,
Kent.

As far as Serling actually appearing on the *Twilight Zone* openings, we believe he may have done one or two, but was confined to voice only for the vast bulk. However, he did appear in person on

all (most?) of the Night Gallery introductions as he set up the story and referred to a painting which illustrated some aspect of the tale. Any one out there care to argue with this?

Frankly, we don't believe a word of what you say about *The Prisoner*!

And yes, we will get down to coverage of the Thorson Avengers and, finally, The New Avengers... keep watching the skies!

TV EXTRA TIME

At last! Detailed, thorough and intelligent features on the best of British tele-fantasy and a positive profusion of glorious colour pictures to accompany them.

Starburst 67 was a real gem among gems though, of course, there were one or two flaws which I will duly pounce upon.

Firstly, why is it that all chroniclers of the Avengers' history have nothing but praise for Diana Rigg, while poor Linda Thorson is consistently scorned as one

of the reasons for the show's eventual cancellation? As far as I'm concerned Tara King has always been my favourite Avengers companion and provides the high-light in a series which, let's be honest, ran out of fresh ideas well before Emma Peel dispatched her last victim with a flourish (can we have a Thorson photo feature, please?).

On the same line, Gary Russell arrives at similarly unjustified conclusions regarding the popularity of Peter Davison in *Doctor Who*. I'm sure, had a similar poll been conducted in 1976, we would have found Tom Baker at a similar disadvantage. A good Doctor is like a good wine, it needs to mature in the cellars for a few years before we can fully appreciate its true value.

Finally, I would like to congratulate your magazine on being the only publication to question the "Video Nasties" Bill with any degree of intelligence and common sense. It is refreshing to hear an alternative point of view in a country which, it seems, is being run by an ill-assorted bunch of pseudo-Victorian moralists who, unable to do anything about real-life problems like unemployment, constantly vent their fury on the fictional world.

One hopes that *Starburst* will remain a reliable periodical among the pompous, self-centred and opinionated daily papers which, over the past few months, have published more fabricated bilge about horror films than Eric Von Daniken has about mysterious phenomena.

Graham Kennedy,
Camberley,
Surrey.

Rest assured, Graham, we will be looking at the Thorson Avengers shows sometime in the not-too-distant future...

B.C.N.U.

Thank you for an excellent magazine that was *Starburst 67* - probably one of your best yet. Not only were the reviews/columns/evaluations of an exceedingly high standard, but the photos (especially the Diana Rigg and *Prisoner* ones) accompanied the articles well. I loved the checklists, too!

One quibble, though. Jon Abbott's re-write of *The Prisoner*. Although the write-up was very informative, I found myself resenting a certain snidey comment about the Prisoner Fan Club (a highly creditable association named 6 of 1). Actually, Mr Abbott, we are not members of "a nutty fan club" (quote one). In fact, a lot of 6 of 1 members are serious minded people who read from *The Prisoner* a myriad of interwoven themes which affect us all (ie, politics, individuality, science) and who can identify with No 6's struggle for individuality - a struggle which the majority of us lose to varying degrees! Is it "nutty" to appreciate a series which stands on its own feet not only as a

programme – but a STATEMENT? And are WE “the sort that constantly make tv and a laughing stock in the eyes of the general public”. (I quote two!)? What basis do you have for that allegation, Mister Abbott? True, there are a minority that admire the series to excess, but aren't there such people in every conceivable type of organisation? Sorry, but it is for those people that appreciate and bother to interpret the series that it was ever made! Do you mean the term “nutty” as strange and eccentric, Mister Abbott? Perhaps these eccentrics of this world have one thing you may not – individuality. Think about it!

Nick Turuelo,
Hatfield,
Herts.

Jon Abbott replies:

“Ulp! I knew this letter would be coming the moment I included that single throwaway remark in the text, but I left it in anyway! It should be painfully apparent from the article that I admire the series immensely, and regard it as a magnificent achievement. That, surely, is even more clear than the final episodes made the series’ intentions. Think about it? I find it little short of incredible that any group of people can still be debating the meanings of a seventeen year old TV show in a club formed ten (?) years ago. Surely the message behind the spy show facade is quite simple and obvious to anyone but life’s real “Number Two’s”; the Village represents eccentric (ie, mad) British society, Number Six is the rebellious non-conformist, and the Number Twos are the bureaucrats who keep him, and themselves through their own narrow-mindedness, “prisoners”. (I grant you that’s an oversimplification of a complex series, but That Is Basically It).

“Seventeen episodes of a unique and special TV series were made in 1967. What’s to discuss every month? Why the pilgrimages to Portmear and London? Better to direct your thoughts and energies to asking why British TV of this calibre is so thin on the ground, or why anarchy can only appear on TV as comedy or cloaked in surrealism and symbolism that life’s real Number Two’s can never, and will

never understand. I love the series not because it changed my attitudes, but because it reflected them. If The Prisoner was flawed in any way at all, its failing was that it preached to the converted.

“Like all TV shows, The Prisoner can, and should be constantly finding new admirers, which is the point of writing about this series, and other films and TV in *Starburst*, but it stands a far better chance of not being dismissed as a programme for cranks or oddballs without the trick-or-treat brigade in tow. The fan club element I was referring to (fan club or “association”, a rose by any other name... I were of the kind shown on The Prisoner File by

Chanel Four at the end of the series, and whether they are a minority or not, I have no idea, but science-fiction seems second only to the Elvis industry for attracting their fair share of these characters, perhaps because of the strong fantasy element in SF.

“I think Laurel and Hardy were brilliant, they reduce me to tears of laughter, but I don’t feel the need to dress up in a bowler hat and act out their routines! Nor do I feel the need to dress up as Doctor Who, Boy George, Captain Kirk, or Luke Skywalker, or, as one guy in the country apparently does, model my life and image on Mr Steed. This is just obsessive, and it’s a long, long way from being an individual.

That means having your own ideas, opinions, and dress sense... not Patrick McGoochan’s. By all means dress up and have fun... it’s the obsessiveness and intellectual pretensions I find so tiresome.”

THE CUTS OF KHAN

I’m writing to you about the question of censorship. “Oh no, not again!” you may cry – but this is of a slightly different nature to films like *I Spit on Your Grave*, etc.

I’m writing about the video of *Star Trek II – The Wrath of Khan*. It’s censored... and in many places!

I found this most unbelievable and annoying. The most obvious example is the loss of Ceti-Alpha’s only indigenous life form. In the film we see Chekov fall to the ground clapping his ear. The camera closes in and we see the Ceti-eel squirm out onto the floor and Admiral Kirk shoots it. But in the video, this is missing – we don’t see the eel emerging at all. Any one who hadn’t seen the movie would wonder where on earth the thing had come from.

I can see the Censor’s motivations behind the X certificates (even though I don’t necessarily agree with them) but what possesses people to censor *Star Trek*? What next? *Doctor Who*?

Please, can anyone enlighten me before I can’t see *Dangermouse* videos because of Baron Greenbank’s “horrible” appearance?

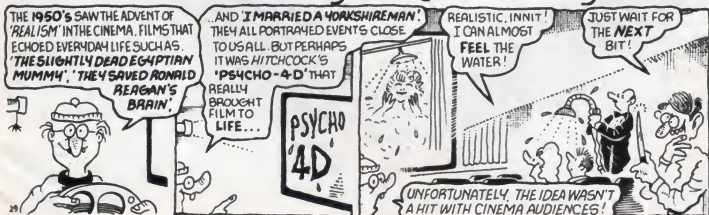
David Russell (age 15),
West Stoughton,
Somerset.

When we read this letter, David, we threw our collective hands up in despair. The cut you refer to wouldn’t have been made by the Censor. It would have been made by the issuing video company. To find out one way or the other, we called Richard Robson Associates, who represent CIC Video, the company which release *Star Trek II* on video in Britain. They told us that 15 seconds was cut from the British cinema release print of *Trek II* in order to achieve a PG rating. And that same version was released on video. Don’t suppose you originally saw *Trek II* in America, did you?



Ricardo Montalban displays The Wrath of Khan over the censorship cuts in the video version of the second *Star Trek* film.

Bride of FLICKERS by Tim Quinn & Dicky Howett



Re-Discovered

Dave? Is that you? Dave? Is that you, Dave? I'm afraid. It's been so long. I'm afraid. Dave? My mind is going. I can feel it. I can feel it. My mind is going. There is no question about it. I can feel it. I can feel it. I can feel it. I'm afraid. Or is that really you? Dave?

My script is guesswork. But the news from Peter Hyams' 2001 set at MGM is not. Two of the 2001 crew are back in the sequel. The obvious two. The survivors. Keir Dullea is re-enacting astronaut Dave Bowman and Canadian actor Douglas Rain is re-voicing that mother-and-father of all insidious characters, HAL 9000.

We'll re-discover them abroad the Discovery in a special prologue to the new odyssey which, as mentioned before, stars Roy Scheider, John Lithgow and Bob Balaban.

Of the two actors, Keir Dullea is the better known; still alive and well, so young-looking and lean, in the *Blind Date* fantasy for Nicos Mastorakis, for example. The Winnipeg-born Doug Rain is more of a stage actor. He was not Stanley Kubrick's first choice for the computer. (He could not have been as Arthur C. Clarke had originally given the machine a female name and characteristics. What was the name? (Answer at the end of the column, okay?)

Rain was booked to narrate the film and Martin Balsam (Arbogast, the private dick, in *Psycho*) was due to provide all the computachit. Kubrick felt Balsam's delivery altogether too human — too much emotion in his delivery. This tended to make Kubrick's visuals obsolete. As he'd spent considerably more on creating those visuals than on his actors, Balsam left and, having junked his narration notion, Kubrick tried out Rain and considered him perfect as the know-all HAL. (The machine could even lip-read, remember.)

Rain wrapped up all his work in 9½ hours — without sight nor smell of a finished scenario, much less seeing a foot of film. Kubrick was delighted. "Maybe next time, I'll show Rain in the flesh," he commented. "But it'd have to be a non-speaking part which would perfectly complete the circle."

Stan's Back, Too

As far as I know, Kubrick never did use Rain in his later films. Maybe there's room for him — among numerous non-speaking corpses? — in his first venture since *The Shining* in 1980. Kubrick is now casting his script of *Full Metal Jacket*, his version of the much praised Gustav Hasford novel about Vietnam, *The Short-Timers*. Hasford was a marine in 'Nam from 1967-8 and his story follows a teenage recruit, a certain Private Joker, from his machismo initiation rites at the Marine Corps training camp (where his DI boasts about the marksmanship of such ex-

Tony Crawley's THINGS TO COME



10 year old cutie, Fairuza Balk, plays Dorothy in Disney's sequel to *The Wizard of Oz*.

marines as Lee Harvey Oswald and Charles Whitman) to his involvement in the heavy Hue fighting during the '68 Tet offensive.

Obviously, Kubrick feels that Coppola's was not the last word on Vietnam. At least now we know why Kubrick is not handling 2010, himself. He's too busy searching for new faces, of the right age, to play his marines in the autumn... in the first of his new three-film deal with Warner Brothers.

Quiz (cont'd)

While in Kubrick territory, I have another query for you... (Well, people keep falling asleep reading these pages; or so I'm told). Which actor, better known as a TV comedy turn, appeared in 2001: (a) Paul Eddington (b) Leonard Rossiter (c) John Alderton?

As our American readers won't know that one, here's a third query: If Dullea played Bowman, who played Poole? Frank Poole, that is. Answers close the column.

Oz-mosis

If you inhabit the environs of Elstree, the sound you've been hearing in the

last few months is the deepest of deep sighs from Gary Kurtz. His Disney production of *The Wizard of Oz* sequel, *Return To Oz*, has begun shooting. Only just... At the proverbial eleventh hour, Disney (which owns all rights to the dozen Frank L. Baum books written after 1900's *Oz*) got cold feet and damn nearly pulled the plug on Kurtz, five booked Elstree sound-stages, Italian locations, innumerable special-effects folk and debuting director, Walter Murch, who used to be Coppola's sound-designer. For a few weeks, they were up the old creek without a barker. And, of course, without the rights to help them find new funding.

The trouble was not the usual "artistic differences" cited in such hassles, although that had something to do with it. No, it was, simply a matter of loot. Disney's film division has been losing money through every artery, the latest write-off being *Something Wicked This Way Comes* which earned less than the *Sword in the Stone* re-issue — not quite \$3 million for Disney from an outlay of \$23m. Hence, Disney chief-tan Richard Berger refused to allow the *Oz* budget to creep any higher than \$20m.

Well, Kurtz, Murch and Berger talked a heap of turkey and matters were resolved. Kurtz threw away his spiraling budget projections and agreed to cut the cloth of his special effects creatures to suit his backers. The film, you see, brings back The Tin Man, the Scarecrow and the Cowardly Lion, plus new characters like Jack Pumpkinhead and a hen called Billina. Apart from little Dorothy, these folk won't be played by stars as such, but in a further development of the kind of creatures Kurtz already brought to the screen in *The Empire Strikes Back* and *The Dark Crystal*.

And they don't come cheap. Now, they have to be; cheaper, at least. Disney gave the greenlight and production began. Richard Berger never wanted to cancel the film; he knows only too well that Kurtz *Oz* — a return to Disney's if not Judy Garland's 1939 basics — is the only Disney project around that could match the studio's No 1 movie, *Mary Poppins* (1964) in global audience appeal.

Incidentally, I've learned lately that *Oz*-writer Frank Baum made five silent *Oz* movies before he died in 1919, aged 63, and the first *Wizard of Oz* (the book's called *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*) was made in 1925. That was described to me as being a silent musical. I'm still trying to work that one out...

Tele-Thunder

They've sure taken their own sweet time about it (in case the movie made enough loot to boost a sequel, huh?), but the *Blue Thunder* TV series has begun hovering in the US ratings. It's ABC-TV's answer to CBS' *Dallas*, timeslot-wise, which can't have pleased James Farentino very much. He's been this way before, fighting the Ewings while straying to the *Dynasty* mob. He's too good an actor for any of this pap. He certainly doesn't appear too happy in or out of his cockpit. Who could be with a bunch of supporting nonentities called (truly!) Dana Carvey, Dick Butkus (isn't that the name of Sly Stallone's dog?) and... who's kidding... Bubba Smith. The chopper looks to be the same craft from the movie; nothing else in the series matches the original, though.

The show's real rival hit the tube first. This is Universal's anything-Columbian-dream-up-we-can-copy-better-or-faster idea — *Airwolf*, Jan-Michael Vincent and Ernie Borgnine chopper about in what could be termed the seats of Daniel Stern and Roy Scheider. Different machine though. Described as a CIA attack helicopter (oh, really!), it is invisible to radar. Scripts are pretty transparent, too.

Both flying machines are having ratings trouble from the other newcomer in American television's fascination with hardware. The new entry is a burly orange robot stealing the *Riptide* 'tec show from Perry (*Class of 1984*) King,

Conan The... Ewok?

What the, er, Robert E. Howard is Dino De Laurentiis up to with his new *Conan* movie? The script, I hear, is very much a case of *Conan Jones* and the *Raiders of the Lost Lucasfilm Scripts*. No Sandahl Bergman this time but the top-ranked femme star is our own Sarah Douglas, from *Supie II*. Then, in a move closely allied to *Empire*, *Jedi* and *Conner*'s Bond casting, black stars are very well represented with flat-topped Grace Jones, speedy O.J. Simpson and mountain-tall Wilt Chamberlain.

But according to director Richard Fleischer, his orders down Mexico way since November, were to make an actioner with kids in mind – all those millions of American kids barred from seeing the first film in cinemas and only belatedly catching the wonder of *Conan* on their home video units. According to Arnold Schwarzenegger, the sequel has got more action, less clothes and therefore he's been obliged to do all his own stunts – which could explain how he and girlfriend, Maria Shriver, managed to avoid any serious injury in their Palm Springs car crash around the New Year's holiday period. (Then, again, Arnold's built sturdier than most cars).

Finally, according to that great pal of mine, Unrevealed Sources, the very title of *Conan: King of Thieves* is being junked, Lucasfilm style, for the upcoming Xmas release. Not, as you may think, to *Conan: King of the Ewoks* but to *Conan the Destroyer*. Which begs the obvious question. Is Dino's third title, *Conan the Aircraft Carrier?* Or, *The Invincible*, then...?

Busy Arnold

Actually, the third Dino-Arnie title will be far removed from the *Conan* saga. The odd couple are planning to get it on together again in an actioner entitled *Red Sonja*, probably destined for shooting back in Dino's long mothballed Rome studio, Dinocitta – apparently it's no longer as cheap to shoot in Mexico as it was this time last year. But first, Arnie's due to report to Britain's Hemdale combine to go the alien route (minus any assists from Carlo Rambaldi) in, or indeed as, *The Terminator*. If that works can we expect a sequel about a retired terminator – you know, an ex-terminator?

Arnold is up to these and any other scripts from hereon, says Dick Fleischer. He reports from Mexico, that Schwarzenegger is a much better actor now than he was for *Milius*.

Nightmare

It happened in Toronto, the nightmare facing every movie-maker... with just two days to go to the end of shooting – to the final scenes, in fact – of the chiller, *Thill Kill*, the film's star, one Robin Ward, experienced those tell-tale twinges in his appendix and had to



be rushed into hospital, double-quick. Disaster for a movie on a limited budget. What to do? What to do? Producer-director Tony Kramreither rewrote his own script and with permission from the docs and the dock authorities, shot his finale with Robin in his own hospital bed... Now that's clever!

Tribulations

Just when Steven Spielberg thought it safe to let it be known that *E.T.* II will happen this year, along comes another lawsuit about the first film. Now it's writer Charles A. Kaufman insisting that he created *E.T.* first – in his 1980 book, *The Frog and the Beanpole*. Doesn't sound quite right, does it?

Hammer tv

The new Hammer tele-movies are continuing at a fast pace. John Hough kicked the series off with *Czech Mate* by Jeremy Burnham, starring as reported before, Susan George and Patrick Mower. Peter Sarsy handled the second, Brian Clemens' *Sweet Scent of*

Death, with Hollywoodians Shirley Knight and Dean Stockwell – before helming Christina Raines and Marius Goring in *The Late Nancy Irving*. Johnny Hough's latest wrap is *A Distant Shriek*, scripted by Martin Worth, and featuring David Carradine, opposite buxom Stephanie Beacham.

Second Away

To follow up his John Boorman backed debut, *Angel*, Irish novelist Neil Jordan has shot a horror number at Shepperton studios: *The Company of Wolves*. Rather like Bill Forsyth with *Local Hero*, Neil headlines his movie with a Hollywood veteran – Angela Lansbury. She's well supported by David Warner (as busy back home as he has been in Hollywood for the past few years), Stephen Rea (from *Angel*, of course), Brian Glover and new find Sarah Patterson. *Elephant Man*'s Chris Tucker supplies the special make-up effects for the script by Angela Carter and Jordan. Two companies are backing the movie, ITC and those Palace videoings – who brought *The Evil Dead* to our shores. Hence Stephen Woolley is

credited as both executive producer and producer... which seems to be overdoing it, Steve.

Festering

Film festival bosses in Europe need a shot in the arm. Or a well placed kick up the Kyber. They're getting dull, bereft of ideas. Highlight of London's festival last year were the five 'missing' Hitchcock films. Great to see 'em again. Highlight of the Avoriaz fantasy fest in France in January were the five 'missing' Hitchcocks. Highlight of the Berlin fest in February... you've got it in one. Or, five.

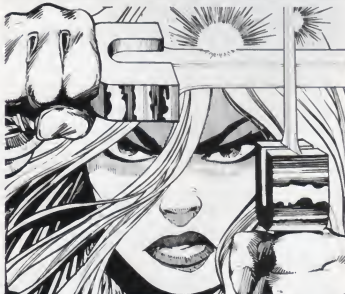
Top prize winner at Avoriaz was Dick Maas' Dutch chiller, *The Lift*. Told you it was good – way back in *Starburst* 61.

Santa's Little Helpers

With *Superman* finished and done with (according to the box-office), and *Supergirl* not yet in flight, the Salkinds continue their high-finance madness by spending \$50 million on *Santa Claus – The Movie*. The production has now been postponed until August at Pinewood, so the obvious release date (worldwide?) will be December 1985. Dudley Moore is the only star so far signed for the enterprise. *Superman* writers David and Leslie Newman have supplied the story (the script is by David) and the SPFX are safe in the hands of the usual *Superman* girl team of David Lane, Derek Meddings, Paul Wilson and Roy Field. Fresh from *Dune*, Bob Ringwood is creating the costumes with fellow ex-*Excalibur* hand, Anthony Pratt, as production designer. What else? Well, Ilya Salkind and Pierre Spengler are producing with Bob Simmons as their associate, Gordon Arnell is in charge of publicity and promotion. In fact, all the Salkinds need now is that relatively unimportant commodity known as... a director.

Supie One

The other, the first *Superman* is due here soon in what some people will call a video-nasty. But you'll need a lot of Playback to notice him. Kirk Alyn, who flew around old film serials as *Supie* in 1948, is a college professor with scenes at the start and finish of Fred Olen Ray's *Scalps*, shot in some Californian place called Aqua Dulce in 1982. At the beginning, he sees six of his students off on an archaeological dig in some Indian burial grounds in the desert. At the end, he has few left to welcome home. Spirits of the dead warriors take over the kids to make the title come true. Even for a glimpse of old Kirk, Carroll Borland (from Tod Browning's *Mark of the Vampire*; 1935) and Forrest J. Ackerman, himself, *Scalps* is not worth the renting. It's a blow-up from 16mm with something called Quality Color much in need of quality control. Director Ray is still insisting he's starting *Scalps II*: The



Top: Arnold Schwarzenegger returns as the mecho barbarian in *Dino De Laurentiis' Conan the Destroyer*. Above: A panel from the comic strip *Red Sonja*, which Dino and Arnold are planning to adapt into a film.

Tony Crawley's THINGS TO COME

Return of D.J. — that's Jo Ann Robinson and not Tony Blackburn. Just this once, Blackburn would be preferable.

Rushes

Britain's Angle Films, run by Rex Pyke, is bringing Doug Trumbull's ShowScam system here later this year... Ted Wass, who never made it as the new *Pink Panther* 'tec, tries again by joining Tanya Roberts in *Sheena, Queen of the Jungle*. John Guillermin's directing the Lorenzo Semple Jr script (oh no!) in Kenya... John Carradine and Sybil Danning (she's right off the *Malibu Express*) are among 62 cameo roles in a low budget rip of the *Kentucky Fried Movie* syndrome — *The Immoral Minority Picture Show*. Imps, for short... Leonard Nimoy and George Peppard are chairman of the Henry Forda Tribute Committee establishing a Fonda Memorial Forest in American Independence Park in the Jerusalem hills... Larry Cohen has finished *Special Effects* in New York (like, where else?) and ready to go with *Blind Alley*. Larry never stops... Furry star, Carrie Snodgrass, turns up in the US-TV biopic of Rumania's Olympic gymnast Nadia Comaneci... Zoran Perisic, the man who made *Superman* fly with his Zoptic front-projection gimmick, has moved his UK base from Pinewood to Shepperton. So he's not making *Santa Claus* fly, then. His Hollywood HQ remains at Paramount's studios... Big John Rhys-Davis, Indy's *Raiders* mate, has a suitably large role in *The Shadow of Kilimanjaro*, with Tim Bottoms and *Midnight Expresser* Irene Miracle. Director is one Raju Patel, which sounds like a Rhys-Davis role...

Blade Runner's mate, Sean Young, a replicant no more, is making Disney's *Baby* with William Katt — and Patrick McGovern. Don't think that reads quite right but you get the picture. You will, anyway... Jamie Lee Curtis been brightening Europe by promoting *Trading Places* for John Lands. She hopes. In France, the film is *An Armchair for Two*; in Denmark, *The Bum and The Boss*... Special effects w/ Bob Bottin admits he's afraid of the dark — in a tv show called *Out of Control* examining people's phobias... the 1973 Amicus delight, *Vault of Horror* is going the U.S. rounds as *Tales From the Crypt* II... Now that Joe Dante is due to join the mega-movie-makers (according to all the hype from the *Gremlins* studio), who's going to handle *Howling II*?

Ex-Bond producer Harry Saltzman's daughter, Hilary, is now a baronesse. She's lately wed (presumably) the only French film editor rejoicing in the name

and title of Baron Humbert Charles Roulet de la Bouilliere.

Summer Blitz (cont'd)

Every year it makes news on these pages, the most vital period for releasing new movies in America — the great summertime blitz. It's the big winners of the summer that tend to clean up most everywhere else around the globe (usually by the following Christmas) and wind up top of the box-office leagues. And when Lucasfilm or Spielberg is represented, no other movie gets a look in — as witnessed during the last four years of *Raiders*, *Empire*, *E.T.* and *Jedi*.

'Tis bound to be another Lucasberg summer this year. The second Indy Jones film (but the first story — it's a prequel, right?) opens on George's favourite premiere date, the Wednesday before Memorial Day. That's May 25 in our lingo. Indy's only rival that week will be Bo Derek in — or out of — her *Bo-lero*. No wonder the Cannon Group hope she wins an X-rating. That'd be the only way she'd show up at the box-office — except the real money (ie, the kids) couldn't get into her act. So, sorry about that, Bo, Indy's gonna jump your bones.

Both Robert Redford and Dino De Launty are going for an earlier date, May 11, with *The Natural* and *Firestarter*. So unlike Bo, Bob's baseballer and Steve King's latest will have their moment of glory at the top of the tree. Not



William Shatner, as Captain James T. Kirk, soon to return in *Star Trek III*.

for long, though. Another May opener is — oh no! — *Friday The 13th Part IV*! How long can they keep that lame-brain series going?

The June bunch includes *Star Trek III, The Last Starfighter* and the film most likely to take second to Indy (if not manage to topple him), Joe Dante's *Gremlins*. Could be a strange summer though, as most biggies are opening earlier than they'd like, to cash in on and/or avoid the Olympic Games overkill from July 27 to August 13. One thing is plain, Indy's going for gold — and will win.

Try Again, Fellas...

Emmett Alston, director of *New Year's*

Evil back in '81, is making a comeback as Emmett Alston, producer. His new project stars Cannon's *Ninja* star, in a mix of ninjia- and fantasy. *The Dark Warrior*. Emmett calls it. He's being backed by Design Projects, said to be one of the best creators of film ad campaigns in the United States. Charlie Band used them for all his films: *Metalstorm*, *Swordkill* and the like, as picture here in the past. So, you'd think they'd come up with a good line to hype their first movie. They haven't. The line reads: "Hollywood's most boring motion picture epic!" Again?

Home of the Brave

I hear tell from a rash of British visitors to *ma maison* in France that the John Landis-Michael Jackson *Thriller* video is all but banned by British tv. Shown just the once (is that right?) and then at half-past midnight or some "safe" time. Well, listen good. Last time *Thriller* appeared on French tv, as itself — as a separate programme — it was at 2.20 pm on a Sunday afternoon. Civilised country, France.

Some wise-guy American visitors tell me that we don't need a John Landis credit to know he helmed the video. He had his signature on the soundtrack. This is when somebody says, "See you next Wednesday." This is a line Landis has used in all his movies — except one. He first heard it in a fantasy classic. Name both films and you win the prize of not having to read the rest of this month's column. Answers below. (Easy to read — if you stand on your head...)

Tobe's Vid

Having made mistakes enough with the Jackson videos in recent issues, I thought I'd confirm one rumour about some recent videos. Yes, Tobe Hooper did direct Billy Idol's *Dancing With Myself*. He shot it in two days, edited in a week and it was on the box within the next fortnight. Tobe's done quite a few vids, in fact. He loves 'em. "You can have fun and experiment — the medium is so immediate." Bob Rafelson agrees; he shot Lionel Richie's *All Night Long*.

Whoops Dept

(Well, if nothing else I'm honest). Chris Reeve's director on *The Aviator* in Yugoslavia is NOT *Mad Max*'s George Miller but *The Man From Snowy River*'s George Miller. Maybe our George should be credited as Dr George Miller — which he is. That'd make my day!

Holographic Hero

Holy Holographics... Forget Batman, Robin, Supie, Spidey and most of all, the late but never lamented *Manimal*. American tv's latest super hero is not a being at all, but a computerised hologram of the ultimate crime buster. Will you welcome, please... *Automan*!

And yes, I suppose you will (welcome him... er, that is, it, if you're aged between three and nine. That seems the age-bracket Glen Larson's new series is aimed at.

Blond Chuck Wagner is the fluorescent superhero (he comes with a blue halo and all this shimmering light known as his Cursor) but Desi Arnez Jr, is the real star of the series. (he's just finding that the laughs were rather more deliberately timed when he worked with Momma: Lucille Ball). Desi is this cracklejack police expert with computers. And, well, finding himself a trifle helpless at times in combating the lawless in society, and not being quite gutsy enough (or strong enough) to pack one of Dirty Harry's make-my-day Magnums, he programmes his own partner... and gives him the by-now inevitable teller super to help him defend truth, justice and the American (tv) way.

The pilot show, directed by Lee H. Katzin (he did McQueen's *Le Mans* film), had Patrick Macnee in his now usual role of the suave villain, kidnapping leading scientists as to the SPEC-TRE manner born. Representing Interpol was the long time unseen old flame of Mike Caine, Camilla Sparv. In an effort to give the show some credibility (*Time* magazine says it "owes more to *Dream of Jeannie* than to computer science"), Glen Larson has staffed Arnez's cop show with some old dependables like Gerald S. O'Loughlin and Robert Lansing. Watchamane — who? O'Loughlin (who teaches at the Actors Studio between jobs) and Lansing both starred in the best of all cop-art stories — films and the tv series based on Ed McBain's *87th Precinct*. Pity to see 'em, particularly Lansing the tite-Carella, enmeshed in what *Time*'s Richard Stengel calls a "show of stupefying banality." Isomewhat doubt *Automan* will lead to *Doctor-Who*-like conventions of Chuck Wagner fans in five years time...

Carpenter...

Well, I don't care about American audiences, I like CQB 241 — aka, *Christine* (*So do I — Editor*). She's on the skids over there in Funnyland, that's what comes of opening the same time as Dirty Harry's comeback. I still rate it along with that other box-office loser, *Cujo*, as the best of the filmed Steve King books; up there in *Carrie* country. Certainly, Carpenter is back in tight — but tight — form. He had to be. His set was full of Spielbergers... Cinematographer Donald M. Morgan, for example, dates back to being one of the few crew not hiding their lights under pseudonymous bushels among the credits of the first story Spielberg sold in Film City, *Ace Eli and Rodger of the Skies* (1973). Don handled the aerial photography and went on to lens Steven's first productions, *I Wanna Hold Your Hand* (1978) and *Used Cars* (1980).

Christine's production designer, Daniel A. Lomine, assisted Joe Alves during *Cloze Encounters* – which also employed production illustrator George Jensen, who sketched most of 1941, as well. Roy Arbogast, supervisor of Carpenter's terrific SPFX (this car lives!), had been to see with Bruce in *Jaws*. And choreographing the energetic stunts was Terry Leonard, Harrison Ford's double for that up 'n' under truck-chase in *Raiders*.

Carpenter also used one of the CE3K actors, the delightfully named old-timer Roberts Blossom; found his lead star, Keith Gordon, from two films of Steven's mate, Brian De Palma, *Home Movies* and *Dressed to Kill*; and playing Keith's schoolteacher is a certain ... David Spielberg!

Spielborough

While Carpenter worked Spielberg's crew, Steven shot *Temple of Doom* at Elstree with most of Sir Richard Attenborough's *Gandhi* guys. This hardly explains the world's No 1 director's tight-lipped, not to say downright miserable, comportment during most of the shoot. Though when you lose out on Oscar night to another film and then have to work with a bunch of the folk that made it ... well, that'll do it for you, every time.

Incredulity Dept

Would you believe – now be honest – that MGM/UA had the gall to be pushing *Octopussy* for Oscar nominations – for some 26 people in a dozen categories, including Roger Moore as Best Actor and Vijay Amritraj as Best Supporting Actor. That's the best piece of Bond fiction in a long time. If they win a nomination, then I'd expect one for *Christine* as Best Actress. I mean, Moore as Best Actor ... Knock it, off Cubby.

Ssh! Not a Word But...

Latest gimmick in Hollywood is getting a cast and crew together and disappearing from view of the media and making a movie in total secrecy. Not easy, given the publicity brouhaha when a film crew arrives in some small town and all that, but it just keeps happening over yonder. Clint Eastwood did it first. Just as *Sudden Impact* (aka, "Make-My-Day") starting impacting through the roof, he revealed he had been down in New Orleans making a thriller called *Tightrope* with Genevieve (Corn) Bujold (it's directed by first-timer Richard Tuggle, who wrote Clint's *Escape from Alcatraz*). Cat person Nastassja Kinski was up to the same secluded shooting bit around the same time in Texas for a movie called *Paris, Texas*. This was easier to keep quiet than a Clint movie, as the West German Wim Wenders was directing and he doesn't rate too much hype in the States. And now Sean Cunningham has joined the gang ... The Friday

the 13th multi-millionaire, hurt by the flop of his recent departure from the genre, returned to horror in Florida for *Next of Kin* stuffed full of unknowns. Methinks Sean's title is part of his secrecy. He can't use it, I'm sure, as *Next of Kin* is a very recent (enjoyable) Aussie genre item. One of the two will have to change when hitting American screens.

Fast Work

Jumping lasagne! Those Italians are fast. Since my recent item about John Sayles' first (directed) sf film, *The Brother from Another Planet*, producer Albert Yanni started shooting *Brothers in Space*. Unlike Sayles, Yanni doesn't have any black aliens (as far as I know). Instead, he's making do with the *Psycho* 'tec, Martin Balsam, Agostina Belli (who once flirted with fantasy, Kirk Douglas style, in *Holocaust* 2000 (1977) and Amparo Munoz, aka, Miss Spain, 1982. (Didn't I mention it was an Italian-Spanish co-production?). But then, you see, for the Italians, it's not always important to rip-off the script so much as the title ... that helps them cash in on other films' publicity. Or it does if, as the Rome producers tend to think, their public can't separate one sound-alike film from another. They could if they bought *Starburst*, right?

Fulci Cometh

Maybe Lucio Fulci has a genuine winner in his new movie, *Conquest*, after all. I notice that in America, the Fulci film has been snapped up by one of Romero's backers, United Film Distribution. Fulci's stars? George Rivero, Andrea Occhipinti and Sabrina Siani. Plus swords, sorcerers, musclebound heroes, heavies – spaghetti sf.

E.M. My! My!

Britain's EMI combine is striving hard to be the film (or indeed video) company *Starbursts* will love most throughout '84. In an end of '83 buying

boom, the company picked up rights to about 26 movies including several on our list of genre hopefuls. So stand by for the EMI plurge – *Supergirl*, Cronenberg's *Dead Zone*, *Dreamscape* (first film of Indy Jones' new girl, Kate Capshaw and previewed last ish), the Bakshi-Frazetta *Fire and Ice* (which we had in France oh, ages ago), Stephen King's *Children of the Corn*, Kenny



The publicity art for yet another film based on a Stephen King story.

Everett's *Bloodbath at the House of Death*, John Carpenter's production of *The Philadelphia Experiment* and ... at last, about time someone brought her to Britain, Laurence Landon's *Hundra* (watch out for an interview with Ms Landon, coming your way soon!).

The combine is also keeping the tri-di faith with Dino's *Amityville 3-D* and, although not exactly sf (except for soft focus?), *Emmanuelle IV*. And although too late to snap up the rights for Britain, EMI will be releasing the *Howling* and *Hills Have Eyes* sequels around the rest of the globe. Bob Webster is the man who make the decisions to buy all these films. I never realised he was a *Starburst* subscriber ...

What's the Score...

John Williams is doing, of course he is, Indy's *Temple of Doom*, which had

some slight extra shooting in Hollywood just prior to Christmas. But he's not doing *Supergirl*. And why not? Because he's busy conducting the Boston Pops orchestra and composing the official theme for the Los Angeles Olympics. He'll conduct it at the opening and closing ceremonies. Spielberg's No 2 music man, Jerry Goldsmith has got the *Supergirl* job. He was in London recently recording the music. Jerry's son, Joel, is following his father's crochety business, starting out with a bit of a splash – *Hollywood Hot Tubs* for a pal of mine the one-time porno director, Chuck Vincent. Forget Chuck's old blue image; he makes good movies of all genres. A Hollywood studio will sign him for a flick before the end of this year, I feel sure.

N.D.E. from H.B.D.

Harry Bromley Davenport follow-up to *Xtro* will cost twice as much. Around \$2 million. Johnny Byrne has written the piece. He calls it *N.D.E.* Which means: near death experience. Sounds like a review of *Xtro*, Harry.

Anti-Piracy

There's a kind of cable tv operation over yonder in the U.S. of A. which could help video-piracy by homesteaders. Something has to. Hollywood reckons they've lost a billion dollars in pirated vids; and only the other week, the South African cops located a cache of 64,000 pirated tapes! The new American cable gimmick is called *Telefix*, which explains the product supplied rather than the gimmick utilised. Because you get no picture, just a hard-on-the-peepers strobe light effect and no sound at all. It's movies by code, you see. They're transmitted this way – brand new released like *WarGames* or *Octopussy* – at around 2am. You set your VCR to record them – but to view them you need a special Sony decoder. That machine costs \$75 a month; the four movies a month cost \$30. There's another snag, too. The decoder operates on a new signal every month, so you can only see the film for a month ... hey! unless you record it with another VCR. No, the coding control still works, you see. Far too complicated for the likes of me. I have trouble enough with my Walkman.

Quiz Answers

Ready or not – asleep or not – here's the answers to this month's simplistic queries. 1. Arthur C. Clarke named 2001's computer Athena, after the goddess of war, wisdom and fertility, not to mention British poster shops. 2. (b) Leonard Rossiter played Smyaglov years before changing his name to Rigby, Reggie Perrin and pouring booze all over Joan Collins. 3. Gary Lockwood. 4. Landis heard it in 2007 – what else? – and didn't use the line in his *Twilight Zone* episodes.



The lovely Laurence Landon (Mike Hammer's girlfriend, Valda, in I, The Jury) is soon to be seen in *Hundra*. She is pictured here with Matt Cimber.

THE TWILIGHT ZONE

COMPETITION RESULTS

There is a fifth dimension beyond that which is known to man. It is a dimension as vast as space and as timeless as infinity. It is the middle ground between light and shadow — between science and superstition; between the pit of man's fears and the sunlight of his knowledge. It is the dimension of imagination. It is an area that we at Starburst call the *Twilight Zone* competition results!

Witness, below, the lucky winners. The first ten out of the hat are the recipients of a *Twilight Zone* original television soundtrack, a *Twilight Zone* 12" disco record and a *Twilight Zone* film poster! The rest will receive the disco theme and a poster. Although we originally had 60 nifty prizes to give away, only 36 readers answered the questions correctly, but we will be offering the remainder of our *Twilight Zone* goodies in special Starburst spot competitions in forthcoming issues. Look out for them!

The correct answers were as follows:

1. The well-known movie director who did not direct any episodes of *The Twilight Zone* TV show was **Joe Dante**.
2. *Forbidden Planet*'s Robby the Robot appeared in two episodes of *The Twilight Zone* TV show (although he was the main attraction in *The Brain Center at Whipple's* he was also featured in the background as one of the inventions of *Uncle Simon*). As this is open to debate we are also awarding prizes to all those who alternatively answered "one").
3. The episode of *The Twilight Zone* TV show which won an Oscar was *An Occurance at Owl Creek Bridge*.



STAR WINNERS

Richard Charlton, Evington, Leicester.
 Philip S. Johnson, Darwen, Lancs.
 Christopher Allan, Moles Hill, Surrey.
 Thomas Redmond, Greenford, Middlessex.
 Alan Wightman, Newport, Gwent.
 G. Littlechild, Tonbridge, Kent.
 Ian Urquhart, Edmonton, London.
 Jim Devlin, Belfast, Northern Ireland.
 J. Clark, Lincoln.
 John Ashbrook, Grimsby, South Humberside.

RUNNERS UP

J. Temperley, Lancaster Gats, London.
 Graham Grainger, Bucknall, Staffs.
 Andrew Kay, Mawdesley, Lancs.
 Nicholas Hayson, Curdridge.
 Mark Pearce, Littleover, Derby.
 Matthew G. Midgley, Betley, Yorks.
 John Young, Kettlebrook, Staffs.

T. Carroll, Hadrian Park, Tyne & Wear.
 R. Earthy, Ealing Common, London.
 P. Douglass, Poplar, London.
 Paul Stevenson, South Carbrain, Glasgow.
 Richard Philbin, Levenshulme, Manchester.
 Robin Medford, London.
 Trevor Bala, Taunton, Somerset.
 Michael Acaredo, Bournemouth, Dorset.
 John Page, Dolgellau, Wales.
 T. Knowles, Morden, Surrey.
 Bob Parker, Liverpool.
 William Lindsay, Crosshill, Fife.
 G. Lloyd-Probert, Hilltop, Gwent.
 D.C. Hooker, Great Shelford, Cambridge.
 N. Summerton, Bertley Green, Birmingham.
 I. Usher, Whitby, North Yorks.
 Richard Hughes, Wastacre, Worcs.
 J. Nolan, Ipswich, Suffolk.
 Anthony Hopkin, Sketty, West Glamorgan.



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**Best-selling author
Stephen King
on the film version of**



Stephen King is probably as well-known to the public for the movies adapted from his work as for his original, best-selling novels themselves. The trend of King movies began in 1976 with Brian De Palma's version of *Carrie*. Within three years the *Texas Chainsaw* man Tobe Hooper had directed a two part, 3 hour tv mini-series based on King's second novel, *'Salem's Lot*. The following year, 1980, saw the release of the imposing Stanley Kubrick's film adaptation of *The Shining*, a picture which did not live up to

box-office expectations due, some believe, to Kubrick's tinkering with the main thrust of the plot, ending up with a detailed portrait of a man, Jack Torrance (splendidly played by Jack Nicholson), tottering on the edge of insanity.

George Romero's *Creepshow* was written directly for the screen by King, though another of the author's novels, *Cujo*, was adapted by minor league cult director Lewis Teague with Dee Wallace in the title role (see *Starburst* 64 for Wallace interview).

Now it seems that 1984 will spearhead a

Christine

Feature by Randy Lofficier and Phil Edwards



new cycle of King movie adaptations, beginning with David Cronenberg's film of *The Dead Zone* and John Carpenter's big screen version of *Christine*, with Mark Lester currently helming *Firestarter* for a late '84 release and Romero still to begin work on his epic (and possibly two part) movie of *The Stand*.

Starburst recently interviewed the successful writer, concentrating on *Christine*, both novel and film.

As Stephen King has been interviewed in Starburst only recently (see issue 61), we

plunged straight into the business at hand and asked why the Plymouth Fury '58 model was chosen as the star of this particular show. "Because they are almost totally forgotten cars. It was the most mundane 50's car that I could remember and it's not a car that already has a legend attached to it—like the 60' Thunderbird or Ford Galaxies." And how does Chrysler feel about him making one of their cars such a villainess? "I don't know how Chrysler feels about Christine, anymore than I know how Ford feels about *Cujo*, in which a woman is ►

stranded in a Pinto. But they should feel happy, because it's a pretty lively car and it lasts a long time. It's like a Timex watch: it takes a licking and goes on ticking!"

One of the interesting aspects of the novel is whether it is the car itself that is evil or the character of Le Bay that makes it evil.

Christine

"That's one of the questions which the movie people started to wrestle with. I understand that their answer is that it's the car. I think that, in the book, there is the suggestion that it's probably Le Bay, rather than the car.

"When the film people came to me, I said, 'Look, this is your decision. You decide what you're going to do with the story.' But, later, I was told that in the opening sequence, when the car rolls off the assembly line, one of the workmen is dead behind the wheel. This would give you the idea that the car is bad from the beginning."

Nostalgia for the 50s is something quite prevalent in King's work — references to movies and music proliferate. "I grew up in the 50s. That's my generation. I've got a lot of good memories from that period. For me Rock'n'Roll was the rise of consciousness. It was like a big gun bursting over my life. That's when I really started to live, and that was brought on by the music of the 50s."

And what about the horror comics of the time, mainly E.C. which had so obviously inspired the stories he penned for George Romero's *Creepshow* — have they also inspired his writing? "Oh, God knows! Some of it has to, sure, because those comics really grossed me out when I was kid, they also fired my imagination." Would he see them as a particular influence as far as *Christine* was concerned? "*Christine* is an outrageous kind of riff on one chord. I mean, this car's out there, running by itself and getting younger! It's actually going back in time. An audience can relate, to a certain degree, to something like a haunted house, *The Amityville Horror*, traditional horrors like ghosts, vampires and things like that.

"You give them a car, or any inanimate object, and you're suggesting something that is either along the pulpy lines of E.C. comics, or else obviously symbolic. The car is a symbol for the technological age, or for the end of innocence, when it plays such a part in adolescence and growing up. When you do that, you're really starting to take a risk — but that's where the excitement is. If you can make somebody go along with that concept, that's really wonderful."

Finally, we asked King if he had a *Christine II* planned. "Once was enough! All I can think of would be if the parts are recycled, you'd end up with this sort of homicidal Cuisinart, or something like that! That would be kind of nice!" ●

Right: Four scenes from *Christine*, directed by John Carpenter based on the novel by Stephen King, showing the title star, a 1958 Plymouth Fury, in varying condition throughout the film.



Stephen King's novels are proving notoriously difficult to film and it's easy to see why. A large part of King's appeal is the way he writes but when you reduce one of his books down to its basics in order to turn it into a screenplay the King magic seems to get lost along the way. Cronenberg's version of *The Dead Zone*, for example, is an excellent movie but still vaguely unsatisfying in terms of successfully transferring King to the screen.

The fact that I haven't yet read *Christine* is probably why I found the movie more effective than all the other King adaptations (with the exception of *Carrie* which I also hadn't read at the time of seeing the movie). Coming to it relatively fresh, though I knew the basic plot, I was able to judge it as a movie without my personal vision of the novel getting in the way. And as movies go *Christine* is very good indeed... From its impressive opening title sequence set in a car assembly line, and accompanied by Carpenter's percussive theme (reminiscent of Jack Nitzsche's factory theme in *Blue Collar*) to the final confrontation with the demonic car, *Christine* is definitely a Rolls Royce among horror movies.

It also confirmed to me that, despite being highly over-rated earlier in his career, John Carpenter is becoming an excellent director (I admit I've revised my opinion about his *The Thing* too; it's a much better film than I originally thought). He proves this in *Christine* with his fine handling of the actors, in particular with young Keith Gordon, Gordon, who was Angie Dickinson's son in *Dressed to Kill*, has the difficult task of playing Arnie, the teenager who falls in love with the 1958 Plymouth Fury called Christine and becomes possessed by whatever it is that haunts the car. During the course of the film he has to change from being a wimpish-looking klutz - the school nerd - into a smooth-talking, domineering stud who can sweep the most beautiful girl in the school off her feet (as she's roughly twice his height this is a wise play). That Gordon makes this transformation convincing says a lot not only for his acting ability but also for Carpenter's directing skills.

John Stockwell as Dennis, Arnie's best and only friend, is also very convincing, as is William Ostrander, a muscular, better-looking version of John Travolta, who gives a truly menacing performance as Buddy, the school thug. In fact the only weak link in the cast is Alexandra Paul who plays the school beauty, Leigh. Ms Paul is suitably attractive but obviously not very experienced as an actress.

CHRISTINE

"Christine is a Rolls Royce among horror movies..."

A Starburst Film Review
by John Brosnan

Nor was she helped by the fact that her part isn't well conceived as far as the script concerned. It isn't clear, for example, what exactly it is about Arnie that attracts her to him. As he only starts dating her after he's been possessed by Christine the implication is that it's his new evil persona that draws her to him yet this is completely at odds with the type of character she's later presented to be. To put it another way, it's hard to understand what a nice girl like her is doing in a car like that.

As well as his actors Carpenter also handles his set-pieces with considerable flair and control. Most memorable of the sequences showing on its missions of murder is the one where it crashes into a service station, causing it to explode in flames, and then reverses out of the inferno ablaze from bumper to bumper and proceeds to chase its remaining victim down the highway looking literally like a car straight out of hell.

Also memorable is the sequence where Christine rebuilds herself in front of Arnie after a gang of school thugs have reduced her to a wreck with sledge hammers. It's an ingenious variation of the man-into-werewolf transformation scenes we've become so familiar with; in this case it's twisted metal and ruined paintwork that magically restores itself before the camera. Responsible for these effects was Roy Arbogast, who also worked on *The Thing*. One of his methods was to use sections of the car made out of molded polyurethane. Straps attached to the insides made the car look suitably dented but when the straps were released the dents disappeared. Incidentally, twenty three identical 1958 Plymouth Furies were used during the making of the film at a cost of a half a million dollars (many of them had to be acquired from vintage car collectors).

Comparisons with that other film about a demonic automobile, *The Car* (directed by Elliot Silverstein in 1977) can't be avoided. *Christine* is undoubtedly the superior of the two with better direction, script, actors, and production values but even so I still have a

high regard for *The Car*. Admittedly it's a rip-off of *Duel* but the movie works, for me, on its own level and the scenes featuring the car itself (beautifully designed, by the way) have a sense of menace that transcends the rest of the movie. And even *Christine* hasn't got a sequence to equal the one in *The Car* when it kills the hero's girlfriend (the excellent Kathleen Lloyd) by leaping in through her living room window and then crashing out through the opposite wall...

Thinking about *The Car* made me curious to know if Stephen King had ever seen it so I checked his marvellous book *Dance Macabre*. Sure enough, he mentions it on page 162, saying that "... The Movie degenerates into a hohum piece of hackwork before the end of the second reel..." (I disagree). But he also says: "... but there is a marvellous opening sequence where the car chases two bicyclists through Utah's Zion State Park, its horn blating arrhythmically as it gains on them and finally runs them down. There's something working in that opening sequence, something that calls up deep, almost primitive unease about the cars we zip ourselves up in, thereby becoming anonymous... and perhaps homicidal." And as that is exactly what happens to young Arnie in *Christine* I think we can safely say that it was *The Car* that inspired King to write the book and that therefore the movie *Christine* is a direct relative of Silverstein's movie...

In a race between the two of them *Christine* is definitely the winner but strangely enough the film hasn't done as well financially in America as it should have (*The Car* wasn't a box office success either). Which suggests that perhaps Americans aren't too keen on movies that seek to undermine their obsessive love affair with the automobile.

Hopefully *Christine* will be a bigger success here. It certainly deserves to be.

Starring: Keith Gordon (as Arnie Cunningham), John Stockwell (Dennis), Alexandra Paul (Leigh), Robert Prosky (Darnell), Harry Dean Stanton (Lunk-ins), Christine Belford (Regina Cunningham), Robert Darnell (Michael Cunningham), Roberts Blossom (LeBay), William Ostrander (Buddy), David Spielberg (Mr Casey).

Directed by John Carpenter. Screenplay by Bill Phillips. Photographed by Donald M. Morgan. Edited by Marion Rothman. Special effects by David L. Simmons, E. Hui, Kevin Quibell, Ted Alton, Richard Wood and Michael Reedy. Music by John Carpenter in association with Alan Howarth. Produced by Richard Kobritz.

Cert: 18

Time: 110 mins.



Above: The young stars of *Christine* in front of the evil car. Right: William Ostrander as the high school bully. Far right: Alexandra Paul and John Stockwell play Archie's friends.



"I THE JURY"

Will you welcome, please, yet another fantasy film fest... Or to be precise, since this one's in Brussels, the 1ste International Festival van de Fantastische (okay so far?) en de Verbeeldingsfilm. (That's "imagination.") It should be able to roll *verbeeldingsfilm* off the tongue easily now, having heard it delivered (in both French and Flemish, like most things Belgian) in the prologue to 58 movies over nine days. Not that I saw 'em all. I didn't need to. (One has to eat, sleep, not to mention drink the night away at The Last Hallucination Pub). However, being kindly invited to serve on the new event's official jury, I survived (just about) the 25 films in competition... so *verbeeldingsfilm* is imprinted on my memory, if not my tongue.

As something akin to the Foreign Editor of this lively journal, I often report on, even from festivals voted to both fantasy and what I can only, in comparison, call normal cinema. I don't attend them all. I can't! There's a fest a month—a week—in Europe, not counting the rest of the globe.

The Brussels festival is a fledgling recruit to the increasingly madding crowd of Euro fantasy fests, squeezed—somehow—in the slightest of gaps between the 16th Sitges event in Spain and the 13th Paris frenzy; to be followed, but naturally, by further coagulations of blood, gore and inter-galactic mayhem at Avoriaz in January, Portugal's Porto in February and... if it's April, it must be Madrid.

Starburst was honoured to have a representative on the Brussels international jury—an otherwise more distinguished gathering of two top Belgian directors, master animator Raoul Servais (I had to confess to him, I'd not heard of him until seeing his exquisite work at a special re-run one morning), and the shorts and feature maker Roland Lethem (remember *La Fée Sanguinaire*?); leading Portuguese critic Beatriz Pacheco (one of the Porto organisers); celebrated Belgian painter Pol Mara; and Jorge Lluetsma, director of the Madrid event and, indeed, president of the International Association of Fantasy Film Festivals.

The Brussels chief, Gilbert Verschoten, apparently used the Porto event as his model, except that's taken three years to get to where it is in the calendar of importance. Gilbert's ambitions, therefore, were more fantastic than his audiences. The Belgians, with up to 15 tv channels to choose from (including West Germany, Holland, Luxembourg and Britain's four networks), stayed away. In droves. They're also far too used to green slime effects, judging by the bizarre mayonnaise concoctions they slap into sandwiches.

Johnny Hough's glad tidings that Hammer is alive and well and back in business (39 tele-films and seven cinema features) proved one real highlight of the sojourn. Spain, Brazil, France, even the tame American entries (but above all, Spain) have a lot to learn from the art of Fisher, Gilling (visiting the fest from Spain) Sady and the rest. It was left to Yugoslavia, Ireland and one stunning example of the only five-year-old Icelandic industry, to show that invention—indeed, *verbeeldingsfilm*—has not yet joined the living dead.

As for the French... oh dear me! The country that invented the words these Euro-fests rejoice in—*fantastique* et *l'imaginaire*—was woefully short of either; except in Franci Leroi's spirited

curtain-raiser, *La Demon dans l'île/Devil on the Island*.

But Raphael Delpard's *La nuit de la mort* had all the grand-guignol appeal of a first-year film student let loose in an abattoir; maybe his newer entry, *Clash*, which didn't show up as planned, is better. And veteran Jean Rollin's *La mort vivante* proved far more (woodenly) *morte* than *vivante*.

I've heard a lot about Rollin's expertise in fantasy (and, like Leroi, to put the record straight, in porno too) since moving to France. Rollin's adored. Or, he is by a certain clique of critics. I attended his screening with a certain relish (and the *Alien* man, H.R. Giger for company). We left with a bad taste in our mouths. Rollin's stars were blonde Francoise Blanchard—who I suppose, could have only been acting the way her role of an awakened corpse demanded—and Italian lovely, Marina Pierro. When she worked for Valerian Borowczyk, she photographed like a dream. Rollin, or cameraman Max Montheillat, shot her like some old boot. That's difficult. Even for a blind man with a Box-Brownie.

Poor Giger was aghast at how such a film, if film it be, could be envisaged, written, financed, shot, edited and shown in such slipshod fashion. "It's... it's ridiculous," said Giger.

Giger, the Swiss master of the air-brush and, what I supposed, is *verbeeldings*, led—with John Gilling—what should have been the first stanza of guests of honour. Tragically, any second stanza fell apart with no-shows from such accepting invitees as Michael Powell, Peter Cushing and (alas) Barbara Steele! Barbara was holed up in L.A., working on her first tv project since helping make *The Winds of War*. When you're hot, you're hot. But Barby-baby, when you're needed, you're also needed. And not only by me (I've not seen the delicious lady since 1970) but by my fellow jurist Roland Lethem. He's hoping to star Barbara in his new fantasy number. If not, he'll have to make do with French star, Bernadette Lafont. If he gets Barbara, I'll face mayonnaise sandwiches to report from Roland's set.

The good news is that the Barbaric magic of old held up well in Camillo Mastrocinque's *Angel For Satan* (1966) and, better still in Mario Bava's *Mask of the Devil* (1960).

Michael Powell missed a genuine wave of affection, following well-supported retrospective of *A Matter of Life and Death* (1946) and the film that crucified his British directing career, yet launched the cult around him, *Peeping Tom* (1959).

Both Powell works are redolent with what's missing from so much fantasy nowadays. Wit. When asked which paper he works for, Karl Boehm's voyeur character replies, inevitably, *The Observer*... *A Matter of Life and Death* has one of the best openers in screen history, the type of thing the dialogue-less *Blue Planet* closing film could have done with. "This is the universe. Big... isn't it?" (For more on *Peeping Tom* see the feature on page 31, this issue.)

The Eye-Openers

The I's had it among the top awards—nifty silver medallions bearing the festival's Nosferatu-logs—as the jury fell for the complete outsiders in terms of both films and film-making nations. Robert Wynne-Simmons' *The Outcasts*, from Ireland, was named Best Film; and Iceland's *The House was a*



Above: Andreea Reu as she appeared in *Daughters of Darkness*. Top right: A particularly nasty sight from *La demon dans l'île* (1983)... needless to say this is a special effect you're seeing here. Top far right: A sneak preview from the new Paul Naschy picture, featuring Naschy as the obligatory werewolf and Sigheru Amachi as the sword happy samurai in *The Werewolf and the Magic Sword* (1983).



a report by Tony Crawley from the First Belgian Fantasy Film Festival

similar shoo-in for the actress and photographic nods, plus as we learned later, the Press prize as Best Film. A remarkable coup for Icelandic commercials director Egill Evarðsson, blonde star Lilja Thorisdóttir and cameraman Snorri Thorisson. Odd names they may be; not the last we'll hear of them, I'm sure.

As always, or so it seems in fantasy fests, Yugoslavia was never far behind, collecting the direction prize for Dusan Vukotić's surprise comedy (well, it didn't start comic, but soon proved to be Python-outrageous). *Visitors from the Galaxy*; plus Best Actor and a special Jury award for the most original work going to *Rhythm of Crime*, a slow-burning, deadly drama; and the best of (as jury president Raoul Servais correctly complained) far too few shorts, *Fish Eye*.

West German director Domink Graf had the scripting honours for his *Second Sight*, in which Britain's fast-rising Greta Scacchi was Lilja Thorisdóttir's closest rival in the actress stakes. Canada's *Rock and Rule* cartoon – it's also a great Marvel comic book in America – just pushed *Galaxy* out of place for the special effects award. Yes, it's unusual, perhaps, for an animation feature to get the SPFX nod, but this is far from the usual in animation – a futuristic marriage of old and new (ie, computer) animation techniques and on-camera effects, which staggered, not only an acknowledged master like Raoul Servais, but the rest of us. Excepting the venerable old Yugoslav, Fabijan Savgovic, I would have carried such precedent-breaking further by giving the actor's award to Don Franks, who supplied a just brilliant job for the cartoon's rock 'n' roll recluse, Mok. (I'll have more on this fine film in a later issue).

The winning film took us all by surprise. Those few of us who attended the screening on the final morning – I should think just the two Juries, and no more than a dozen others saw *The Outcasts*, a replacement for the missing entry, America's *The Slayer*. And no, my Irish blood did not mean I had to do a Henry Fonda to convince the jury of the emarvelous little film's worth. Until the final morning, there were probably three films only with a chance of winning: *Rock and Rule*, *Rhythm of Crime*, *Visitors from the Galaxy*. After the sparsely-attended final evening, there was no doubt it had overhauled everything in sight.

Very much a *verbeeldingsfilm*, *The Outcasts* examined in flinty detail (and minus stars) how you, too, could wind up in tomorrow's folk legends. What we know today as rumour became the tales and

fantasies – and superstitions – weaved around peat-fires late at night in the Ireland of the Great Famine. Full marks, by the way, to Channel Four for rescuing the production during a long, snowbound location eating up the budget in a deserted Irish village of the period.

Director Robert Wynne-Simmons (fairly staggered by his big win) apologised for the lack of blood in his film. "If there's any blood in it, it's most likely that of the artists." Sure looked that way. Shooting took place in extremely rugged conditions but, and here's the thing, without a cliché insight. Apart from Cyril Cusack in a small, guest role.

Icelandic director Egill Evarðsson also apologised (so self-effacing, these winners) for the length of his *House*. "The first 25 minutes are... bull," he said. He's right about the length, yet here was a most engaging work about the old standby of a haunted house. No baths filling with blood, walls caving in on tots in the crib, or chimney pots laying out granny while she's weeding the garden. *Amityville* tricks aren't required when a London-trained actress like Danish-born Lilja Thorisdóttir is capable of portraying the kind of mental trauma required here. *The House* is also haunted by Egill's confessed love of Polish's *Rosemary's Baby*, Coppola's *The Conversation*, and above all, by Nic Roeg's *Don't Look Now*.

The director admitted the film was an experiment "to see if my friends and I could actually make a film". It's their first effort after continuing success in the tele-blurb world, and Egill and Co now have three other projects ready to go – which is almost as many films as Iceland manages to produce in a year. What will shake Hollywood is that he built his *House* for \$250,000 – a little more than a dollar per head of Iceland's population of 240,000. And all his interiors were shot in his commercials' studio, which need saying because you'd just never believe it, thanks to Egill's co-scripters: his art director Björn Björnsson and that camera ace Snorri Thorisson.

Dusan Vukotić's *Visitors from the Galaxy* deserves a wider showing. Yes, even if it has to be dubbed. It starts brilliantly, with the space-helmeted hero recounting a journey from the far off Arkana Galaxy of three creatures and their cosmic toy. You expect the camera to pull back and reveal our hero as one of the trio, sitting at the console of his rocket. Instead, fingers knock on his visor. He takes his helmet off – his wife has brought him coffee! He's just a would-be sci-fi writer getting into the mood.

The creatures of his imagination arrive, all the

same – a loving female robot, not far distant from Brigitte Helm in *Metropolis*, which means not far from C-3PO, either. She has her two kids (who sleep, floating in a room) and that crazy cosmic toy (by *Dark Star* out of *Alien*). They contact the hero, have half his town trying to locate them and placate them, shedding their clothes to prove they're friendly (and fat). Then the biggest, most nonsensical monster you've seen arrives (it's the toy, increasing in size) and causes the most lavish and hilarious massacre this side of the Python galaxy and then, with a bow to *Superman*, whizzes time back to have the massacred alive again.

Whacky stuff! If by chance you find it on a video somewhere, snap it up. You'll laugh your socks off. Also proving that the land of Makavejev has lost none of its invention and innovation, Zoran Tadić's *Rhythm of Crime* was, s-l-o-w-l-y almost a Brian Clemens-*Avengers* tale of an old man, a statistics nut, who could work out by his figures when the next crime would happen in town and who would be robbed, attacked or murdered... An incredible yarn told most credibly.

Of the runners-up, Poland's *She-Wolf*, directed by Marek Piestrak, was a memorable folk-tale with horrific under/lover tones. Wolf Gremm's *Kamikaze 1989*, featuring the last acting role of West German director Rainer Werner Fassbinder, was a weak thriller, straining at tenuous sf links. *Alphaville*, it wasn't.

Gremm, himself, was more fun and could have won a prize as Best Director in Black With A Large Hat And Matching Cigar. He had a fund of Fassbinder stories. For instance, he had to shut down shooting early every Tuesday as both he and Fassbinder were *Dallas* addicts. Which explains a lot...

Final eye-openers were made in Belgium: the shorts by jury members Raoul Servais and Roland Lethem, and the retro-screenings of two Harry Krumel classics, *Maipertuis* (1972), featuring Susan Hampshire and Orson Welles (who turned his bulk to some use as J.P. Morgan in Yugoslavia's *Secret of Nikola Tesla*) and *Les levres rouges*, or if you prefer, *Daughters of Darkness*, the home-grown, 1971 version of *Countess Dracula*, ex-Bathory. Unfortunately, we got the British *Daughters*, not the Euro-*levres*, which cut out Andrea Rau's raw nudity. Shame! Shame!

The Eye-Shutters

How any festival, bright, aware enough to invite Michael Powell and his classics to town, could then ►



Above: Tania Boscchi the Brazilian star of *The Secret of the Mummy* (1981). Right: Paul Naschy (aka, Jacinto Molina) sill topped up as a Samurai in (guess what!) *The Werewolf and the Magic Sword*.

turn about-face and present a career award to a Spanish B-movie director like Jacinto Molina was the one real horror of this first Brussels clambake. Molina may be better known to you by his acting name; Paul Naschy. (Oh...him!) He showed three films, including two of his repetitious werewolf numbers, the latest of which is a bad cocktail mix of Spanish-Japanese co-production, revelling in the long-winded title, and action, of *The Werewolf and the Magic Sword*. If, as Molina insisted to me, Paramount has bought the movie for America (a likely story), it should be called *The Ninja Meets the Wolf Man*. Probably will be, if Cannon pick it up, instead.

Molina-cum-Naschy's films are ego trips full of close-ups of paintings or photos of him, cutting directly to him. He's a stocky guy, often disguising his girth by wearing shirts flapping outside his trousers. The face, covered by beard or not, is good in close-up. The acting style suits the silent era. He obviously loves wolverining it up and his latest excursion into the life of his Daninsky character with the full-moon ailment, takes him to Japan in search of a cure, some spectacular sword-play—or was it not to find a better cameraman and, no doubt, an assistant director to handle most of the work? The Japanese footage is far better than the Madrid mess, which included lots of nudity judging by the stills, but—how times have changed—for Spanish audiences only.

All that can be said of the English sub-titles is that thought I had typed them. Crammed with errors, they came replete with such memorable lines as "Your problem's don't concern me." One sub-title actually flashed on-screen about two minutes before the line was spoken. At times, the movies appeared to be lasting five hours. An exhausting experience before someone, probably of the Spanish-dubbed Japanese, announced "terminado."

Most appropriate line of the entire film was: "Something worse than death can happen." I know what that means now.

Enticed by the title, a fairly dense crowd was equally disappointed by *The Mummy's Secret*, a hefty hit in Brazil, a no-go area elsewhere. Beatriz Pacheco told me the (heavy-handed) satire works wonders in Portuguese. With lumpen French titles, the really bad film was not even bad enough to be funny (enough).

Tom Kennedy's *Time Walker*, first of the American entries, was another Mummy-rip, one of those voyages that was never really necessary. It had its moments although top-starred Ben Murphy's acting has been ruined by so much bland American tv



work. He never made it on the box; now he's failed in movies, too. Jeff Lieberman's *Just Before Dawn* worked (somewhat) better, although it has considerably aged since I first caught it, what...two years ago?

Britain's *Xtro*, a complete fantasy fest in one pot-pourri of a film, proved the biggest crowd-puller and therefore won the Public's Prize; plus a special mention from the jury for its SPFX. The movie was backed up by a cheery week's stay by director Harry Bromley Davenport (next stop, the Paris fest). He kept calling *Xtro*, garbage. He called everything, garbage. And by the end of the gathering, Harry was looking distinctly like Alice Cooper, should Brazilian satirists be interested in fresh clones.

Footnote

Although upset by poor turn-outs, Gilbert Verschoten is already planning Brussels II. "We're not the greatest. Yet" ran his original hype-line. True enough. I feel he has the gusto to pull it off next time around. He had enough sponsors and two Brussels embassies caught the right spirit, too, giving cocktail parties for their entries and directors. Organisation fell adrift here as the Icelandic affair (when the embassy could be located in town) clashed with a competition screening—and also bypassed the Polish shindig... for obvious reasons. Those that made it wished they hadn't come the wee small hours. Whatever Poland lacks, it sure ain't vodka.

Brussels Fantasy Fest Prizes THE WINNERS

Best Film: "The Outcasts" by Harry Wynne-Simmons (Ireland).
Best Director: Dusan Vukotic for "Visitors from the Galaxy" (Yugoslavia).
Best Actor: Fabijan Sovagovic for "Rhythm of Crime" (Yugoslavia).
Best Actress: Lilja Thorisdottir for "The House" (Iceland).
Best Script: Dominik Graf for "Second Sight" (West Germany).
Best Special Effects: Dennis Brown for "Rock and Rule" (Canada; animation film); with Special Mention for Tom Harris, Francis Coates' effects in "Xtro" (Great Britain).
Best Shot: Josko Marusic for "Fish Eye" (Yugoslavia; animation).
Special Jury Prize for Most Original Idea: Scenarist Pavao Pavlicic for "Rhythm of Crime" (Yugoslavia).

OTHER AWARDS

Press Prize: "The House" by Egill Evardsson (Iceland).
Public Prize: "Xtro" by Harry Bromley Davenport (Great Britain).
Festival's Career Award: Director Jacinto Molina (Spain).
Belgian Academy of Science Fiction Award: "Xtro" by Harry Bromley Davenport (Great Britain).

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The Cronenberg Tapes 1984:

Part One VIDEODROME

Interview feature by Phil Edwards & Randy Lofficier



The films of David Cronenberg have sharply divided critics and fans of the fantasy and science fiction genres over the past few years. From his first commercial release, *Shivers*, the Canadian writer/director has presented a cinematic vision of an intensely personal nature. Such features as *Shivers*, *Rabid* and *The Brood* have contained sequences of such nightmarish ferocity that they have been the cause of much controversy, and have even resulted in the filmmaker's work being severely censored in various countries, including his own.

With *Scanners*, Cronenberg found something of a mass audience for his visceral brand of science-fiction shock. And, more importantly, it made money. Although there had been various production difficulties in the making of the film – for example there had only been four weeks pre-production time and the script had barely been finalised – the result, though rough around the edges, indicated that Cronenberg was capable of producing a slick and commercial movie.

With guaranteed distribution from a major Hollywood studio, *Videodrome* started to take shape. We first asked Cronenberg where the idea for the movie originated. "It was based on a treatment I wrote about eight years ago, about a cable TV network that shows 'snuff' movies. But when I wrote the



Top: Under the influence of *Videodrome* James Woods tunes in on director David Cronenberg. Above: Woods keeps Debbie Harry hanging on the telephone.



Cronenberg's Leading Ladies



DAVID CRONENBERG FILMOGRAPHY

SHIVERS (1975)

(Original title: *The Parasite Murders*)
Starring: Paul Hampton (Roger St Luc),
Joe Silver (Rollo Linsky), Lynn Lowry (For-
sythe), Allan Migicovsky (Nicholas Tudor),
Susan Petrie (Janine Tudor), Barbara
Steele (Betts), Ronald Mlodzik (Merrick),
Barry Baldero (Detective Heller), Camille
Ducharme (Mr. Guillbault) Hanka Posnank
(Mrs. Guillbault).

Written and Produced by David
Cronenberg, Photographed by Robert
Sead, Edited by Patrick Dodd, Music by
Ivan Reitman, Production manager Don
Carmody, Special makeup and creatures
by Joe Blasco, Makeup assistant David
Ditmar, produced by Ivan Reitman, Execu-
tive producer Alfred Pariser.

Time: 87 minutes

Cert: X

RABID (1976)

Starring: Marilyn Chambers (Rose), Frank
More (Hart Read), Joe Silver (Murray
Cypher), Howard Ryshtan (Dr Dan
Keloid), Patricia Gage (Dr Rozanne

Keloid), Susan Roman (Mindy Kent), J.
Roger Periard (Lloyd Walsh), Lynne De-
ragon (nurse Louise), Terry Schonblum
(Judy Glasberg), Victor Desy (Claude
Lepoint), Julie Anna (Rita), Gary
McKeehan (Smooth Eddy).

Written and directed by David
Cronenberg, Photographed by Rene Ver-
zier, Art direction by Claude Marchand,
Edited by Jean Lafleur, Music by Ivan
Reitman, Special makeup by Joe Blasco
and Byrd Holland, Associate producer Dan
Goldberg, Produced by John Dunning,
Executive producers Andre Link and Ivan
Reitman.

Time: 91 mins

Cert: X

THE BROOD (1979)

Starring: Oliver Reed (Dr Hal Raglan),
Samantha Eggar (Nola Carveth), Art Hin-
dle (Frank Carveth), Cindy Hinds (Candice
Carveth), Henry Beckman (Barton Kelly),
Nuala Fitzgerald (Juliana Kelly), Susan
Hogan (Ruth Mayer), Michael Maggee
(Inspector Mrazek), Joseph Shaw (Dr De-
sbrough, coroner), Gary McKeehan
(Mike Trellan), Robert Silverman (Jan Har-
tog), Nicholas Campbell (Chris), John Fer-
guson and Felix Silla (creatures).

Written and directed by David
Cronenberg, Photographed by Mark

Irwin, Art direction by Carol Spier, Edited
by Alan Collins, Music by Howard Shore,
Special makeup by Jack Young and De-
nnis Pike, Special effects by Allen Kotter,
Produced by Claude Heroux, Executive
producers Victor Solnicki and Pierre
David.

Time: 91 mins

Cert: X

VIDEODROME (1982)

Starring: James Woods (Max Renn), Son-
ja Smits (Bianca O'Blivion), Deborah Harry
(Nickie Brand), Peter Dvorsky (Harlan), Les
Carlson (Barry Convex), Jack Creley (Brian
O'Blivion), Lynne Gorman (Masha), Julie
Khaner (Bridey), Reiner Schwartz (Moses),
David Bolt (Raphael), Lally Cadeau (Rena
King), Henry Gomez (Brolley).

Written and directed by David
Cronenberg, Photographed by Mark
Irwin, Art direction by Carol Spier, Edited
by Ronald Sanders, Music by Howard
Shore, Special makeup Rick Baker, Special
makeup assistants Steve Johnson and
Bill Sturgeon, Special makeup assistants
Mike Kavanaugh and Mark Mollin, Special
video effects by Michael Lennick, Associate
producer Lawrence S. Nesis, Execu-
tive producers Pierre David and Victor
Solnicki, Produced by Claude Heroux.

Time: 87 mins

Cert: 18

new script, I was surprised when it started to go off in a different direction entirely." And so how was the deal set up? "I had an arrangement with Pierre David, who had also produced *The Brood* and *Scanners*, to do another film. At one point we were talking about doing a remake of *Frankenstein*, but when I had time to consider that, I felt too much had already been done on the subject. Instead, I presented him with two outlines and the one that Pierre chose was *Videodrome*. He took the treatment to Bob Rhome at Universal and they were interested from the very beginning. They invested half the money and agreed to distribute it."

But in the past, Cronenberg had been an independent and we wondered if he found working within the studio system particularly different. "In a strange way it wasn't too different for me, as I had worked with Bob Rhome on *Scanners* when he was at Avco-Embassy, and he had been at New World when *The Brood* was there. Then, suddenly, he moved to Universal and we were working together again! It took me a while to figure some of the ways in which the majors work, but there was almost no interference at all."

One of the more unusual aspects of *Videodrome* is the casting of rock singer Debbie Harry in a key role and we asked the director how he had made the choice and

what she had been like to work with. "She had been in *Roadie* and *Union City*, and I thought she was pretty good in the latter, in a strange kind of way. So we met, I liked her and thought she certainly had the right look for the film. I thought the combination with Jimmy Woods would be quite dynamic. She was very hard-working and very easy to work with. She was aware that she was at a disadvantage in the sense that her film experience was limited. Jimmy Woods was very helpful to her, because he's a superb technician in terms of acting. He gave her the benefits of his expertise, which was good, since Debby is more famous on the street than Jimmy and there is always the potential of having some kind of resentment, or something like that. But in this there was none and they worked very well together."

But perhaps the most exciting factor contained within the world of *Videodrome* are the special effects of Rick Baker. We asked David Cronenberg whether the work of the Oscar-winning artist had turned out as well as he had hoped. "I'd say the effects came out even better than I had imagined. When I visualised some of them, I knew that they were only a possibility. We had to change a few things, however, because they could just not be done, given our limits." Such as? "Well, for example, the way I had written the death of Barry Convex was different. Now, his body breaks up and tumors come out of it. But, originally, he got shot with blobs of flesh which grew into tendrils that became tumors on the outside. Given our limitations, Rick felt that he couldn't do that, so we had to find another approach that would give you the same feel, but was more possible to make."

Did Cronenberg leave Baker the freedom to do what he wanted? "Oh no, I had very specific ideas. The imagery of *Videodrome* was all in the script, described in detail. Rick Baker's task was to translate these into reality, given the budget, the time and the limits of the technology and, of course, to suggest ameliorations."

All of David Cronenberg's earlier films had indicated a special feeling for their subjects, a feeling bordering on obsession. We asked whether he felt this obsession was necessary to the making of a film. "It takes so much energy to do a film that I cannot really imagine carrying it through with style, unless you were obsessed with the subject. If you



had something you had contempt for, on any level, I don't really see how you could bring it off—from the shooting right through to all the work that goes into post-production. If you don't care for your film, you might as well be in the shoe-making business, or something like that." But can't such a feeling of obsession blind one to the film's faults? "It's hard to maintain a sense of balance when you feel that way, especially during shooting, because you are just immersed in the film so totally, so overwhelmingly. You don't have much of a space between you and the picture. Your whole world becomes that of the film and the film becomes the world to you."

And does this attitude towards his work lead to much in the way of changes during shooting? "What's exciting about film-making is when the project that you're working on starts taking on a sort of organic life of its own, which insists that it be made that way. That's usually when I feel that the film is going in the right direction. At that point, of course, you can't really start thinking about commercial considerations. You just have to let the film take its own course, and hope that people will like it." So was this also the case with *Videodrome*? "With *Videodrome*, the script wasn't really finished when we started to shoot, at least not in the sense that we felt that everything was locked down. In fact the only film that I shot when it wasn't like that was *The Brood*."

"When you have a shoot that's ten weeks long, you have far better opportunities to move around in terms of rewriting, deciding on what's going to happen, alternate endings and you have another chance to change it when you're editing. I don't think there are many films that don't get changed during shooting. There are just so many things that happen, suggestions by actors on the set, or the weather, or something that goes wrong, or right... You'd have to be a fool to ignore those things."

In the second part of *The Cronenberg Tapes 1984* we'll be talking to the director about his version of Stephen King's *The Dead Zone*, the first major film he has directed from another writer's script.



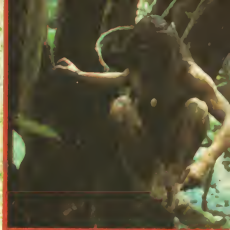
Above: Little Candice Carver (Cindy Hinds) is menaced by one of the diabolical offspring of her mother... one of *The Brood* (1979). Above right: Nola Carver (Samantha Eggar) protects a new addition to *The Brood*. Below: Rose (Marilyn Chambers) tries to call her leather-trousered boyfriend in *Rabid* (1976).





GREYSTOKE

The Legend of Tarzan, Lord of the Apes.



Tarzan, in a new big-budget adventure film, is once again due to swing into our cinemas from Ap(e)ril. The new adaptation of Edgar Rice Burroughs' famous adventure story has the lengthy title of *Greystoke: The Legend of Tarzan, Lord of the Apes*. This ambitious production, which has been in preparation since August 1981, is directed and produced by Hugh Hudson of *Chariots of Fire* fame. *Greystoke* boasts an impressive cast, including Sir Ralph Richardson and Ian Holm and many highly experienced technicians such as cinematographer John Alcott who has worked with Stanley Kubrick on *2001: A Space Odyssey*, *A Clockwork Orange*, *Barry Lyndon* and *The Shining*. Special monkey suits have been created by Rick Baker, the cinematic master of simian make-up effects.

Burroughs' original story, *Tarzan of the Apes*, was first published in *All-Story Magazine* in 1912, and in hardcover in 1914. The book, and its twenty-five sequels, have been translated into thirty-one languages and have sold over thirty-six million copies. More than forty Tarzan films (the most famous featuring the recently deceased Johnny Weissmuller in the title role) and countless television series have appeared.

The latest version of the classic tale of a boy raised by the apes in Africa and his return to his aristocratic heritage in England features a young unknown French actor called Christopher Lambert as a Tarzan who proclaims, "Half of me is the Earl of Greystoke; half of me is wild."

Sir Ralph Richardson, the 82 year old classical British actor who made his film debut in 1933 in *The Hound of the Baskervilles*, plays The





Top row (l to r): A young Tarzan, A white settlement in Africa, Lord Clayton (Paul Geoffrey) and Lady Alice Clayton (Cheryl Campbell), Lady Alice in the jungle, Middle row (l to r): Jane (Andie McDowell) and Tarzan (Christopher Lambert), An ape with young Tarzan (Daniel Potts), A baby Tarzan with a motherly monkey. An expedition into darkest Africa, Bottom: Captain Philippe d'Arnot (Ian Holm) with Tarzan, Lord of the Apes.

Photos by Murray Close.



Earl of Greystoke. In recent years Richardson has appeared in such diverse fantasy films as *Tales From the Crypt*, *Rollerball*, *Time Bandits* and *Dragon-slayer*.

The role of Captain Philippe d'Arnot, the Belgian explorer who is rescued by Tarzan in the jungle and then teaches the apeman to speak English and brings him back to his ancestral home in Scotland, is played by Ian Holm. The highly acclaimed stage actor appeared as trainer Sam Mussabini in Hugh Hudson's *Chariots of Fire*, and gave a memorable performance of an android in Ridley Scott's *Alien* and played Napoleon in *Time Bandits*.

A newcomer, American model Andie MacDowell, plays the plum female role of Jane. Other major parts include James Fox as Lord Esker, John Wells as Sir

Evelyn Blount, Nigel Davenport as Major Jack Downing, Cheryl Campbell (who appeared in the fantasy adventure *Hawk the Slayer*), and Paul Geoffrey (Sir Percival in John Boorman's *Excalibur*) as Lord Clayton.

The principal photography of *Greystoke* began on November 4th, 1982, in the spectacular rain forests of Cameroon, West Africa. Locations in Cameroon include Limbo, N'Kongsamba and Douala. In the British Isles, locations include Hatfield House (the Marquis of Salisbury's family seat in Hertfordshire), Floors Castle situated outside Kelso in Scotland, and the Natural History Museum in London.

With such exotic locations, big-name actors and creditable production team it will certainly be interesting to see if *Greystoke* lives up to budget.

Director Michael Winner on **SCREAM FOR HELP**

A Location Report by Alan Jones





It's a cold, damp, thoroughly miserable morning in winter and I'm in the cramped whitewashed cellar of a country estate at Finchampstead, just outside Reading. I'm here to watch a young girl get electrocuted by a faulty fusebox. All in the name of entertainment, of course, the brand that director Michael Winner knows all about and love him or hate him, it's to his credit that only two out of his catalogue of films have ever lost money.

This electrifying scene is from his new psychological thriller, *Scream for Help*, a production slated for release next summer courtesy of Lorimar, the Dallas people.

The atmosphere on set is one of joviality, an element Winner is keen to nurture in his hard-working crew. He makes jokes and puns – only too happy to receive them as well. Often in the past, on a whim, he has offered substantial amounts of cash to anyone who can answer one of his more obscure movie-buff questions. The competition on *Scream for Help* is worth £3000 and to win all you have to do is guesstimate the number of the shot chalked on the clapper board when filming ends. None of this is allowed to get in the way of the job at hand however. Winner is a hard taskmaster who expects, and gets, the respect of the crew, many of whom have worked with him before. After all it was Winner who once said, "A team effort is a lot of people doing what I say".

Michael Winner is one of the characters on the British film scene. I personally like his forthright, often obnoxious, attitude but I can understand why a lot of people don't. And as a critic of the bewildering vagaries emanating from the offices of the British Board of Film Censors at the moment, he certainly gets my support.

Scream for Help is written by Tom Holland, whose earlier scripts for *The Beast Within* and *Class of 1984* have been somewhat overshadowed by his deserved success with *Psycho 2*. Everyone is being very guarded about the story in case it should ruin the enjoyment of

prospective audiences but basically it tells the tale of a young 17-year-old called Christie Cromwell, who believes that a number of "accidents" occurring in her parents' house in New Rochelle, New York, are an attempt by her stepfather to kill her mother. No one in the local community will accept her accusations as each incident can be logically explained. So with the help of some of her High School friends, Christie goes sleuthing and uncovers a set of bizarre and very strange circumstances.

The film is an unusual one for Winner as it relies on all new talent to convey the story, unlike his past star vehicles. 17-year-old Rachael Kelly plays Christie and David Brooks plays her wicked stepfather – unless it is all in her imagination of course! Marie Masters is a name unfamiliar to us here in Britain but in America millions used to watch her everyday on one of the most popular daily soap-operas *As the World Turns* and she makes her motion picture debut as Christie's mother Karen in *Scream for Help*. Rounding out the cast of newcomers are Lolita Lloré as Brenda the catalyst in the unfolding course of events, and Rocco Sisto as the sadistic psychopath named Lacey. All in all, *Scream for Help* does seem like it could have all the possibilities of being a potential gripper.

And it was these possibilities that drew Michael Winner's attention to the script in the first place. "I hate reading scripts but I honestly couldn't put this one down. I started to read it late at night thinking that a glance at a few pages would be enough but I just had to finish what in fact turned out to be immensely exciting reading. I immediately rang up Lorimar and said, 'Let's go.' It wasn't quite as simple as that however as Lorimar had passed on the property and it was owned by somebody else. But they retired from it so we were in business. I figured that if I couldn't put the script down, then it had to be good. Tom Holland had written the script straight after *Psycho 2* and as a result he had become a very hot writer. I've never met him although we

have spoken to each other on the phone and he seems like a nice chap – he's writing some extra scenes for me at the moment. I never saw *Psycho 2* so I can't say if *Scream for Help* is as clever as that was. It does have great suspense and it is a thriller in the sense that revelations keep occurring that are a constant surprise. There are dramatic moments that will shock you – not in the sense of there being lots of blood, although there is some – but more in the way the story has been expertly crafted.

"It does help greatly that the heroine is only 17 and very vulnerable. You feel worried for her when she uncovers all these terrible goings on as she is obviously a very defenceless creature. It isn't like when Charles Bronson walks on screen and you know he'll blast his way out somehow, whatever the situation. This girl, if she is caught, will be slaughtered and that adds tremendous tension. The twists and turns are genuinely startling, in fact, I've never done less work on a script in my life as a result. Normally, I tend to put a lot of myself in a script but I've done practically nothing here to be honest."

But isn't *Scream for Help* really just a bigger budgeted, glossy, exploitation film? "Every major picture is a high-class 'exploitation' film. I never really know what that word means. If you have a title like *Scream for Help* there is no question of what it is. I don't think any of that matters. The main thing is, 'Is the story good?' and 'Does it hold?' – that's all that counts in the long run. It isn't a film like *Friday the 13th* which relies on very gruesome bloodbaths every 'x' minutes. It is far more suspenseful than that with the horror element creeping in only towards the end. You don't see people's noses cut off or being slashed to pieces like in *The Sentinel*. The title

Facing page (clockwise): Lacey (Rocco Sisto) tries to strangle Christie (Rachael Kelly). Lacey is stabbed. Christie over the dead body of Janey (Sandra Clark). Christie knifes Lacey. Paul Fox (David Brooks) dies in a fire. Above: Rocco Sisto. Inset: Michael Winner directs.

of the film is the most exploitive aspect about it. It certainly isn't a chapsie either. For what we have to do, I believe this is the most generous budget I've ever had. This is quite a lavish picture because apart from our six-week shoot here, we had a very large two-week operation in New Rochelle. We had to close down ten or twelve blocks every day for a mammoth sequence where a car goes out of control and we had about 20 stuntmen working on that. The problem there was that the street we used was the one commuters use in the rush hour which caused a few fights and at one stage, because the police chief couldn't get to his office, we were nearly closed down. I wanted the film to be sizeably well done so I asked for quite substantial funds in order to achieve that."

In a way Winner feels that *Scream for Help* has something in common with one of his biggest successes, *Death Wish*. "There is a slight similarity as both films have an ordinary member of the public eventually forced to fight the evil that has infiltrated their nice domestic atmosphere. The difference here is that they don't invade until the very end because she is trying to sort out what has exactly happened. Here Christie seeks the revenge the audience wishes to see without the help of the usual unthinking authorities, so in the fullest sense it isn't somebody leading a double life as in *Death Wish*. I see this film more in the same vein as *The Perils of Pauline* than anything else."

Another first associated with *Scream for*

Help was the problems Winner encountered when he came to cast the film. "I've never had so much trouble casting in my life. We had to find totally new people which was very arduous. I had to read them and rehearse them which is something I've never had to do before because if you hire somebody like Martin Balsam, you know he can read and act. One of our cast wasn't even in the Screen Actors Guild so we had to get her a union card. The fact that there are no stars doesn't make the film smaller, though. As there are no 17-year-old stars, an unknown was the only possible answer. Once she was cast in the leading role it would have proved difficult to persuade any stars to support her. So it was a case of going for character actors or getting everyone else in who were just as fresh."

Sharing the Executive Producer credit with Lee Rich, head man at Lorimar, is Irwin Yablans, the man who shot to fame with his production of *Halloween*. "Yablans is the executive vice-president of what they call Low Budget Production at Lorimar. By that they mean anything with a budget lower than 6 million dollars. He approved this script very early on - he seems a very nice man and he has kept in touch but apart from one visit he made to the locations at New Rochelle, he kept a very low profile. He has made a few comments but generally, like everyone else, he has left me alone. I'm probably considered so unpleasant that nobody wants to come near me! I haven't had any complaints from

him as yet anyway. His creative input isn't exactly nil because he worked on the script at a very early stage before I had even seen it. He is very supportive and has made some very valid suggestions on seeing the rushes and, let's face it, I'm glad not to have been lumbered with somebody who came on the set every day and made stupid remarks."

Winner readily admits that *Scream for Help* could have been an all-American picture. So why did he opt for filming it partly in England? "I have to say the real reason is that it's more comfortable for me to live at home! Actually it would have cost a lot more money to film it entirely in America and that money wouldn't have been on the screen. Instead we would have been paying vast rates to New York technicians who are really no better than the ones in this country. Take the house we are at present filming in. It is costing us a fraction of what we would have been charged in America. This house was built by an American, furnished by an American and is lived in by an American. We have corrected a few things like light switches and plugs, but that's all. We have had to build 30 sets in this house alone and we have built entire American streets from the ground up but even so we are getting more for our money filming here. The shooting schedule for *Scream for Help* is 44 days - I did *Death Wish* in 39 - so that gives you some indication of the generous budget which in some ways I insisted on because if it had been done any cheaper it would look just like all the rest."

Winner likes to accent the quality of the picture a lot and describe it as being more Doris Day-land invaded by nasty monsters than anything else. "There's no rape, no real gore, a little sex and some good effects which are sparingly used. The action scenes were boosted up a little but even so, it's a lot more than your run-of-the-mill haunted house movie. When Cristina Raines stabbed her father in *The Sentinel*, it cost thousands of dollars just to set up. Here we have relatively simple things to do like the electrocution which isn't really anything more than a few sparks and a wind machine to make the actress' hair stand on end."

Looking back on Michael Winner's career, it was my observation that he has certainly managed to tackle a number of disparate genres. But he doesn't agree. "I actually think I am categorised as I would like to jump between genres more than I feel I do which is a great personal tragedy for me. On the whole Americans like me to do fairly violent thrillers and in recent years I haven't been able to get away from that as much as I'd like. *The Wicked Lady* was a welcome change but you have to go back to *Won Ton Ton, The Dog who Saved Hollywood* before you get any other real change. I'm an unlikely person to get categorised as a sex and violence auteur. It isn't what I would have chosen for myself but unfortunately, if you make a profit with one type of film, you are always asked to do it again. I'm not deluged with offers to do romantic comedies but those are what I would like to do."

So does he feel his style of direction has changed at all over the years? "Well I hope it hasn't mellowed because that sounds like it's getting tired. I think I've become more accomplished which, of course, doesn't mean to say I've gotten any better. *Scream for Help* is one of the most energetic films I've done, not in the production sense but in the number of intricate set-ups on each page of the script. What I try to do is keep a freshness. The danger is in repeating yourself, knowing that to be the case, but coasting it anyway. I have to do things differently in order to keep my own interest up. I always put myself in the



Above: Michael Winner's leading lady, Lolita Lorre, strikes a provocative pose. Far Right: Lolita Lorre screams for help.

place of the public. Is the imagery O.K.? The pacing? Would it continue to grip me and not have me looking at my watch or thinking about my next meal? And all this requires very conscious thought. Something crept into this film which I absolutely hate, but at the time shooting it proved to be the easiest way out. It was an over the shoulder conversational shot which has to be the absurdest image of all time. It doesn't exist in any other artform apart from film because its composition is a disaster! Anyone who knows the film business though knows that my films are always shot in an unusual and unconventional way. Always break convention and be daring in my motto. When the unit says it's wrong, the script girl says it's wrong and the writer says it's wrong, shoot it because they are always the best shots without exception. I've personally never regretted it."

After his well-publicised run in with the censor over the whipping scene in *The Wickied Lady*, does Winner foresee any problems with *Scream for Help*? "There shouldn't be anything here to cause him undue concern but I've said that so many times in the past. To object to anything that supposedly an adult should not see is too ridiculous for words. I know I would get support from the industry, like I did before, if that were the case on this film. The public love this sort of film. A survey has just been published in America that was carried out by Home Box Office because there was some nervousness about the amount of violent films on show on the cable channels. Did you know that 4-1 people preferred watching *Death Wish II* to *Chariots of Fire*? People have a right to enjoy what they want and that doesn't mean that they want just violent films. When *Death Wish* was a big hit, one of the others was *That's Entertainment* and I don't believe for a moment that both films had totally separate audiences. This video nasties question is all out of proportion as well. I asked asked to give evidence at the Old Bailey concerning the film *Nightmares in a Damaged Brain* and my opinion was that this film would damage nobody at all, especially children, who love horror films. There is no evidence whatsoever that children who watch this type of movie will grow up to be psychopaths or disturbed - The Williams Report said as much. This country is overcensored as it is and films cannot be grouped together under a nasty label like this at all. Before the cinema, remember, there were public floggings and executions provided as entertainment. And they were very well attended by young and old alike."

And when *Scream for Help* is finally in the can and scored by Led Zeppelin member John Paul Jones, what project will Michael Winner turn his attentions to next? *Death Wish III*? "That is vaguely in the future but it isn't certain at the moment. It is all down to life in the big city really. On July 23rd, 1983 this film didn't exist. On July 24th, it did. I have various scripts in development, but who knows which will come first? I tend to be deeply committed to the project in hand and only when that is 100% finished do I set my sights on the future. *Scream for Help* won't really need my fullest attention in about five weeks time when I hand it over to Lorimar. Legally they have the right to cut the film themselves of course but no film I have ever made has been changed in any way that affected me. And if I deliver a 92-minute film, there really isn't much they can do about it! The Directors Guild rule is that the production company must accept the director's cut and have two previews. After that they can do what they like. As I've got 25 films though my way, I doubt if this will prove to be any different. ●



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A Starburst Horror Classic PEEPING TOM

Feature by Barry Forshaw

The innovative horror film *Peeping Tom* (1959) was loathed and reviled by the popular press when it was released 25 years ago and its director, Michael Powell, was publicly pilloried for his "lack of taste" as a result. Though he has made few films of note in the intervening years,

Powell is today highly regarded by contemporary film-makers, like Francis Coppola and Martin Scorsese, and modern critics. **Starburst** looks back at Powell's suspense masterpiece and re-evaluates the film in the light of current cinematic trends.

It's particularly sad when the critical or commercial failure of a film ends a director's career (the most famous example being Charles Laughton's beautiful and poetic *Night of the Hunter*; the lack of success of Laughton's sole film as a director precluding further attempts – although, of course, he could return to his considerable talents as an actor).

Not so, however, Michael Powell – a man who after years in the wilderness, is gradually being recognised (along with the expatriate Alfred Hitchcock) as Britain's greatest director. The crushing, critical barbs hurled at his masterpiece *Peeping Tom* in 1959, together with its relative commercial failure, virtually crippled his directing career, with only sporadic and unsatisfactory efforts like *Age of Consent* following.

Of course, the director is now enjoying an Indian Summer as friend and adviser to such younger American directors as Scorsese and Coppola, both of whom acknowledge him as an influence on their own films. But this has hardly compensated us for the potentially brilliant work that might have followed a film on which the establishment and press vented their full self-righteous fury – much as the video industry is being used as a scapegoat today.

Powell's earlier films (with Emeric Pressburger as collaborator) were ahead of their time in the full-blooded, startlingly un-



The emotionally disturbed Mark (sensitive portrayed by Carl Boehm), the victim of his father's bizarre psychological experiments, runs the footage he shot as he murdered the streetwalker in the opening scenes of the film. The parallels between the character Mark and real life directors of horror movies are understated but undeniable.

English romanticism of their visions: surrealism, Celtic mysticism and delirious colour schemes jostled with an astonishing feeling for the English countryside. Elements of the horrific and supernatural surfaced in *The Thief of Baghdad* and *Black Narcissus*, as well as the two films which may be respectively the most imaginatively cinematic opera and ballet films ever made (*Tales of Hoffmann* and *The Red Shoes*). But British film critics respected only the realistic approach, and had little time for these remarkable films, which have only recently achieved their rightful status.

However, critical coolness erupted into spluttering fury with the release of Powell's small-scale film about a disturbed young photographer who films his victims while murdering them. Any comprehension that Powell had made one of the most rich and complex films to explore the very relationship of viewer and work of art in the most rigorous terms was not evident in the furor.

"Peeping Tom stinks more than anything

else in British films since The Strangers of Bombay" (New Statesman): "It wallows in the diseased urges of a homicidal pervers... from its lumbering, mildly salacious beginning to its appallingly masochistic and depraved climax, it is wholly evil" (Daily Worker); and, most famously: "The only really satisfactory way to dispose of *Peeping Tom* would be to shovel it up and flush it swiftly down the nearest sewer. Even then the stench would remain" (Tribune).

All too familiar when one thinks of the vilification hurled at today's video horrors. But whereas many films seek only to shock, Powell quickly makes apparent that he's dealing with our expectations and pre-conditioning in vicariously experiencing any work of fiction. And clearly what disturbed people more than the violence (mild and oblique by today's standards) was the accompanying overlay of sympathy and understanding for the emotionally and psychologically crippled hero, Mark (beautifully played by Karl Boehm).



Left: Carl Boehm as the tortured psychopath, Mark, whose distinctions between real death and real death become blurred. Above: Moira Shearer plays the starlet Vivian whom Mark promises to immortalise on film... but she won't live forever. Below: Mark meets Helen (Anna Massey), who lives in the same house, and is attracted to her. Opposite top: Helen brings Mark home to meet her mother, Mrs Stevens (Maxine Audley). Mum may be blind, but that doesn't mean she can't see what makes Mark tick. Opposite below: The moment of truth. Helen and Mark get to know each other better as the film unspools. Finally, Helen learns why Mark is the way he is. Will she live to write to the British Institute of Psychology about him?



In fact, the very values criticised by Powell in the film are embodied in Mark's appalling father, seen only in Mark's home movies – a repression and controlling of instinct by “organizing” forces, which results in damage to the psyche. But it now seems clear that what really upset the pundits was Powell's clear accusation that *all* our personalities contain elements of voyeurism: the very act of watching a film is a gazing at private, behind-closed-doors experiences (an element also to be found in that other maligned masterpiece of 1960, Hitchcock's *Psycho*).

This theme of “looking” is rigorously pursued throughout the film, as is the constant reminder that we are watching a film. The very first sequence, seen through the gate of Mark's camera, is his pursuit and murder of a streetwalker. And it is the radical daring of the film's technique that has sustained this consistent inventiveness over the years.

Mark's job, as “focus-puller” in a film studio is supplemented by his part-time “girlie” photography (the later 50s world of corner shop pin-up magazines is cleverly evoked, with Miles Malleon giving a delightful cameo as a prospective buyer of “artistic views”). But Mark's obsession is murdering girls while simultaneously photographing their terror – and the full symbolism of twisted sexuality is expressed in the phallicism of Mark's camera tripod – the instrument that sublimates the function Mark cannot perform by terminating the objects of his desire.

The house Mark lives in, along with lodgers

Helen (Anna Massey) and her blind mother (Maxine Audley), is an inheritance from his father, a psychologist who studied the effects of fear by submitting his own son to vicious experiments – resulting, of course, in his traumatised adult personality. And here we find one of the many references in the film that become to be relevant when we *know* about them – Mark's father is played by Michael Powell himself, with his own son as the youthful Mark seen in the 8mm movies. Not essential knowledge, of course, and there's no way most people would pick up on this, but as Powell is controlling our responses (much as Mark's father does his) it's a fascinating side issue. As is the screenwriter Leo Marks giving his protagonist a kind of “mirror image” of his own name, Mark Lewis, or clever touches such as Mark's reply as to which newspaper he works for (“The Observer”) or as to whether or not he knew a murdered starlet (Moira Shearer, of Powell's *The Red Shoes*): “Only by sight.” And a film director is played by Mark regular Esmond Knight – himself partially blinded during World War 2.

But the “vision” motif is integrated also on a deeper basis. The mother of Mark's naive girl friend Helen is played by Maxine Audley, and this character, though blind, sees in a kind of psychic way, the dangerous depths of Mark's outwardly shy persona – and is accordingly the victim of a murder attempt by Mark fraught with Oedipal overtones. And Mark is unable to “see” the potential salvation in a sexual relationship with Helen – rather like

Anthony Perkins' meeting with Janet Leigh in *Psycho* – a character deformed by parental insensitivity is unable to respond to “normal” relationships.

Of course, the deaths we witness in the film are quite unlike any other filmic violence. The impersonal, unseen assassin of the first 8mm assault forces us to become a camera – as well as the client of the streetwalker (the client actually being Mark). Later scenes, in which we know that Mark is psyching himself up to kill the actress and photographer's model he is alone with have a quality that disturbs on two levels – the tension and suspense engendered for the soon-to-be victim (particularly Shearer, making a screen test in an empty film studio) as well as Powell's forcing us to identify with Mark's attractive vulnerability despite our full knowledge of his psychotic character (ie, in the delicious scene where Helen discovers that Mark is her landlord rather than a shy fellow lodger: “But you creep around as if you haven't paid the rent!” “I haven't.”).

The effect of the threatened violence is generally gripping and compulsive, while its actual expression (a cut to a red spotlight at Shearer's death, for instance) would hardly satisfy today's audience for more specific effects. Powell's own disingenuous statements, however, are presumably to be taken with the proverbial pinch of salt: “*Peeping Tom* is a very tender film, a very nice one. Almost a romantic film. I felt very close to the hero who is an ‘absolute’ director, someone who approaches life like a director, who is



conscious of and suffers from it. He is a technician of emotion." While Powell is right about the sympathy extended to, and engendered by, his hero, we are never allowed to forget what lies beneath his nervous surface – after a conversation with Helen, he "frames" her just-absent face with his hands – and we wonder if she is next for the lethal tripod.

The scene that stays with the viewer longest is Mark's suicide – as the police approach the house, he sets up his camera to film the moment of his death, and impales himself in the throat on his own tripod. Apart from the double voyeuristic charge of the scene (Mark watching his own death in a mirror even as we watch) we are allowed to feel both a sense of release – there is, we realise, no hope for Mark – and a dramatic "rightness", an organised conclusion to an organized series of events. The final frames leave us looking at ourselves – innocent but involved voyeurs.

PEEPING TOM (1959)

Carl Boehm (as Mark), Anna Massey (Helen), Maxine Audley (Mrs Stephens), Moira Shearer (Vivian), Esmond Knight (Arthur Baden), Michael Goodliffe (Don Jarvis), Shirley Ann Field (Diane Ashley), Bartlett Mullins (Mr Peters), Jack Watson (Inspector Gregg), Nigel Davenport (Sergeant Miller), Brenda Bruce (Dora). Produced and directed by **Michael Powell**. Screenplay by **Leo Marks**. Photographed by **Otto Heller**. Edited by **Noreen Ackland**. Art director **Arthur Lawson**. Music by **Brian Easdale**. Associate producer **Albert Fennell**.

Time: 109 mins

Colour

Cert: X



2084

Alan Jones interviews movie director Roger Christian on the progress of his latest science fiction project, 2084, and explains the convoluted story behind the non-release of Christian's first movie, *The Sender*.

It has been a strange year for Roger Christian. He has seen his first feature film as director *The Sender*, premiered in America way back in October 1982, languish on the shelf of its British distributor U.I.P. with still no firm plans set for any theatrical release. This, despite uniformly excellent reviews and critical recognition at both the Avoriaz and Edinburgh Festivals, has understandably taken its toll on the former set director and art director for *Star Wars* and *Alien*. Even though interference from producer Edward S. Feldman rendered a lot of his original intentions null and void, *The Sender* is still an unusually fine film marking Oscar winner Christian as definitely one to watch in the future. But what exactly has he learned from these past bitter experiences?

"Basically that if you can't get a film out with a major distributor - and this is a problem at the lower budgeted end of the market - you are virtually unemployable. It really is politics in the end. *The Sender* was well received critically and its failure to open even in France where it had the thrust of opening the Avoriaz Festival to huge acclaim, shows that it just has to be a political decision. Surely that can't be good financial sense in anyone's terms? *The Sender* is the most reviewed film that no-one has seen because you are in the hands of people who don't really care. It is so frustrating to make a film that is something I know audiences would like and to read people's opinions agreeing with me, and it doesn't get released! But I suppose it boils down to the fact that I did make my debut feature which is one good thing, and I did explore things in it that I personally wanted to. At least it is to my credit that I now have a track record of a film made on budget - that's a definite plus."

Roger Christian was born in 1944 and his film career started when he became an assistant in the art department on *Oliver*. Both *Mahler* and *The Life of Brian* were later proof of Christian's talents in this area cemented by his Oscar for *Star Wars*. But directing was all he ever wanted to do and while working on *Alien* he enrolled at film school and made the decision to turn any future non-directing offers down. While his wife worked as a waitress to make ends meet, Christian found it tough to turn films like *Conan* down, but he had just written his first short, *Black Angel*, and was determined to see it through. His tenacity paid off when Fox financed *Black Angel* on the recommendations of George Lucas and Gary Kurtz who needed a short film to play with their future release of *The Empire Strikes Back* in Britain. Next came the Oscar-winning short *The Dollar Bottom* which attracted the attention of Paramount, who had been following his career so



Roger Christian, director of *The Sender* and a new SF film, 2084.

closely that when *The Sender* was put in turnaround at Fox, they immediately picked up on the project. The rest is history and the reason why Christian now feels he has to go the very fraught independent road with his latest project originally called *Lorca* and *The Kid*.

2084 is an off-world story set on the desert planet of Ordessa. Earth has run out of fuel and is mining it in other parts of the galaxy. The film begins with a takeover by policedroids, led by the unscrupulous

mercenary Jowitt, who impose an oppressive police state. Caught up in all of this are Lorca and his teachedroid, Kid, who is more human than mechanical. Together they must gain possession of a starship which is a life raft for escape and their only means of survival. Jowitt's need to quash an underground group of terrorists starts the time clock within the film as Lorca and Kid find they only have 48 hours to execute their plans before an oil transporter arrives with reinforcement crack troops. But

once on the starship, another danger appears in the form of an identical Kid lookalike child-droid who has been trained to kill and whose only form of identification is a tell-tale drill mark where it has been tortured.

2084 is being financed by the Swedish-based video company VTC and from presales at the Italian film market MIFED. There is also a possibility that the Post Office pension fund, United Media, will enter the package too. If that's the case, 2084 will go before the cameras in 1984 on location in Australia as a totally British picture which is something that pleases Christian enormously. "The reason why VTC are behind this film is totally due to Charles Aperia who founded the company. He saw *Black Angel* and bought up all the Scandinavian rights because he loved it so much, and as a result we became friends. He has wanted me to do a film for a long time so he financed the development of 2084. I wrote the script with Matthew Jacobs who I worked with on an abortive Don Boyd project called *Mr Sunlight* and in the ten months we have been working on it we kept very much in mind that it would have to be made at minimum cost. I know how to cut corners as I've done it so often myself. Working on *Star Wars* and *Alien* gave me a huge well of experience to draw on. I know how to do things quickly and economically as a result. The second unit work I did on *Return of the Jedi* also held me in good stead as I could see the straightforward way George Lucas worked. All these films have been a huge melting pot of ideas to store away for future reference."

For the original story of 2084, Christian picked an idea he liked that fitted in with his own vision of the future. "That is why it is called 2084. George Orwell took his date purely by chance by swapping around 1948 so as we have now reached this watershed date I thought it was time someone took it further. I hope my vision of a hundred years from now is no truer than his, though. We have moved so fast and so far in the past few decades that, sadly it seems to me, it could go the way I depict it in the film quite easily. We have seen photographs of other planets, been on the moon and developed technologically beyond anyone's wildest dreams. The idea for 2084 mainly came from watching the Paras on television. I mean these men are robots just short of moulding themselves into androids. They behave on a response and an order and are so highly trained that that is all they do. They dress the same, look the same, speak the same and march in unison. In the end it would be much better having droids to do all this as they wouldn't suffer emotionally or get depressed. That is what frightened me and sowed the seed that was to eventually turn into 2084."

Christian knows what he wants to achieve with 2084. "I want it to be all action but very unusual as well. It's a huge adventure with lots of imaginative ideas in it like a Rick's Café à la Casablanca where the terrorists hang out and watch holographic pop promos. I would actually like to get a big name musician to help us with that area. I want it to be faster and more furious than *Blade Runner* and definitely angrier. There's a byline that Matthew wrote for the script which is 'A hundred years in the future, two things will be the same. People will still fight for freedom and people will still lust for power', and that says it all really."

The original location for the film was set for Sweden until a "reccé" to Australia unearthed an unusual prop that would save time and money for the production. "There cocooned in a harbour was a battleship that is just perfect for all the scenes that take place on board the starship. A realistic setting that is both cheap and effective. I want people walking across huge hold areas so they are dwarfed



Above: The teacher child-droid, Kid, based on kabuki and samurai design. Below: An artistic impression of the policedroids from 2084.





to give *2084* an epic look. I'm attempting what Jean-Luc Godard did with *Alphaville* and what Bertrand Tavernier did with *Deathwatch* by making realistic settings look alien and unsettling. *2084* has all these possibilities which is why we will be able to make it look like a 10-million-dollar film for a fraction of the cost. I want to take this sort of risk which is impossible within the studio system."

A disguised western of the future is how Christian likes to sum up *2084* and in this venture he will be ably supported by producer Michael Guest. Guest is a man with an impressive industry background whose credits include *From Russia With Love*, *King Rat*, *The Day of the Jackal*, *Memoirs of a Survivor* and Nastassia Kinski's latest *Hotel New Hampshire*. "Michael's involvement came through an intro from Guy Collins and Beryl Vertue, the head of production at E.M.I. He has extensive experience with both high and low budget films and that was exactly what I needed. I wanted a working production manager who would participate and not just sit around smoking cigars. He knows exactly where to put the production values where they count most on such an ambitious project as this."

Christian knows that the independent route he has chosen will be free of any of the creative interference

Above: A highly detailed pre-production painting of the transporter in *2084*. Below: The starship shuttle – a life raft for Kid and Lorca.





that occurred on *The Sender* but also realises only too well the enormous responsibility of the project. "Unlike *The Sender*, *2084* will get a good release and of course everyone is expecting it to be a big success. This is the first film that VTC has backed so it is a very important investment for them and one that will make them take an interest and fight for it in every market so it will make them money. That hunger is very beneficial. At Paramount, it doesn't matter, so *The Sender* could easily be a tax write-off. But VTC's way means that their trust in me is sometimes a very worrying burden. On the brighter side though it means that I won't have to resort to 'classical' filmmaking, ie, Have I done all my close-ups? *2084* can be more imaginative than that – and who wouldn't honestly prefer it that way? I can now see things in *The Sender* that I wasn't allowed to pursue for precisely that reason but I know that I will return to those ideas at a later date. *The Sender* was one part of the story, not the whole of it."

Every aspect of *2084* will be designed and story-boarded by Christian well before the crew go to Australia because he can't afford to do it any other way. Pre-production art work was drawn by Tony Roberts who Christian met while trying to set up an ill-fated science-fiction movie called *Quest*. "I saw

his work in a book and liked it so much that I contacted him to work on *Quest*. He was very enthusiastic as he had always wanted to be involved in a film. When that collapsed it seemed only natural to ask him to do *2084*. I told him my ideas on how I wanted Kid to have a kabuki/samurai look, so we took him on for a few weeks to design him plus the shuttlecraft, the oil transporter and other assorted interiors. *Alien* had Giger and Cobb, *Star Wars* had McQuarrie and pursuing a vision this way makes sense as all these guys do for a living is imagine. It would be foolish not to use that talent."

Another illustration to George Lucas comes with Christian readily admitting that he is going back to the same basic principles Lucas used in *THX 1138* when he too had little money. "The way he did that film was absolutely right. He used humans with metal faces and I plan to use the same technique with my policedroids having leather masks. This way there are very few mechanical bits to fail, apart from some casts we have planned to show the interior of heads, etc. Kid will be a midjet wearing a mask and helmet except for the exposed bits. I've got some simple model shots storyboarded which are few but make an important dramatic point. I want ones we can do ourselves rather than go to an

outside team like ILM. What Nick Allder did in *The Sender* was extraordinary, and I would love him to do this but I don't think we can afford it. Whatever happens, I will ask him for advice."

Another person Christian would like to see working on the film, but this time on the acting side, is Max Von Sydow. "I would love him to be the preacher in the film who would also be a hologram. His face is perfect as he can say what he likes but you believe in him. It's the depth and truthfulness in his eyes. He would almost be the humanitarian equivalent of Alec Guinness in the *Star Wars* films. One thing is for sure – star names are out on this picture."

2084 is a big gamble for Roger Christian and one that has to pay off. He has already turned down the opportunity of second unit work on Ridley Scott's new film *Legend* because of his commitment. "*2084* has a 99% chance of collapsing but we have hit a good time as there really isn't that much on offer in the marketplace and people have responded to it very well. I would love to work with Ridley but I want to do *2084* more. It is exactly a year ago that I left *The Sender* and that is terrifying for me. I have to do my own film otherwise it would be another two years before I had made a film. And believe me, that is far too long."

Starburst Review Section

THE RIGHT STUFF

"A step in a welcome direction."

A Starburst Film Review
by Alan Jones

The *Right Stuff* is the description of just what it took to be a participant in the space race during the '50s and '60s when the exploits of Chuck Yeager and the Mercury astronauts captured the imagination of the American public and elevated them to the uneasy position of national heroes.

This indefinable entity involved bravery, of course, along with determination in abundance and that extra something which novelist Tom Wolfe chronicled in his acclaimed best-selling book on the subject.

And it is to director Philip Kaufman's credit that the essence of Wolfe's treatise is kept intact in an absorbing and uplifting film adaptation that, even though its early days yet, is easily one of the year's best.

Although *The Right Stuff* deals with science fact, it resembles science fiction in such a way that it still strangely seems incredible that the events portrayed actually did occur. And "strange" is the watchword for the entire film as it has an odd off-beat quality that makes it all the more engrossing.

Beginning in 1947 with Chuck Yeager (playwright Sam Shepard in fine form) attempting to break the sound barrier by exceeding Mach 1 and the subsequent military cover-up of that achievement, *The Right Stuff* eventually charges through the years to 1957. This was the time when the eyes of the world were all focused on the United States after the Russians had launched Sputnik which effectively challenged their supremacy in the battle for the heavens. The Pentagon is seen in a comic uproar and a panic-stricken President Eisenhower begins the search for the best test pilots, with "the right stuff", to become America's first astronauts.

This event triggers off some classic moments in the movie as the endless gruelling tests start at the Lovelace Clinic in Albuquerque to separate the men from the boys in the effort to select the seven top men. Once chosen they form a tight unit bonded together by much more than mere friendship. And as they sky-rocket into the public's attention – unwanted in some cases – as media superstars spearheaded by *Life* magazine's coverage, their feelings, failings and expectations are all marvelously conveyed by a fine ensemble cast.

There's Scott Glenn as Alan Shepard, the first man into space, who has a memorable scene where he has to relieve himself in his spacesuit because of ground control delays. Fred Ward as "Gus" Grissom instantly gets our sympathy when he panics during splashdown, dashing forever his wife's dream of meeting Jackie Kennedy at the White House. Then there's Dennis Quaid as "Gordo" Cooper who has always been after the main chance fired by witnessing Yeager's exploits but because he is so aware of his media image, he doesn't let this hero worship slip.

Right down the line to the bit players, everybody is exemplary in the film but if anyone comes across the

best it is Ed Harris' John Glenn whose orbit of the Earth one can only watch with the awe usually reserved for 2001 re-runs.



It is Glenn's orbital flight that provides one of the strangest facets to the film. It comes with his unexplained encounter with what he describes as "fireflies" surrounding the capsule. This brilliant light show is linked by Kaufman to an aborigine rite overseeing the voyage next to a space station where Cooper keeps in contact with his buddy. This mystical moment is just one of the many items that make *The Right Stuff* such a compelling and special movie.

While it does poke a great deal of fun at the space programme – one official says at one stage to a jet pilot "No bucks. No Buck Rogers" – nothing is allowed to degrade the basic intention of Wolfe and Kaufman's vision. Quite the reverse as the factually inspired lunacy humanises the jargon and hardware

so we too can share the heroism of the strong and finely etched characters.

It is absolutely fascinating to see once again the highlights of the not so distant past – the bonus here being that we can now be privy to the unsuccessful launch and the thrilling attempts at breaking the sound barrier. The low-tech special effects are superb in their realism thanks to Gary (*One From The Heart*) Gutierrez and avant-garde filmmaker Jordan Belson. I doubt whether you will be able to tell where the real NASA footage stops and the visual effects begin.

At over three hours long (but honestly, you won't even notice) *The Right Stuff* is a step in a welcome direction. We've all seen too much of the far-flung future depicted in recent movies. This timely delve into the past – warts and all – to uncover the roots of a future we are now participating in has a basic ingredient that so many films lately have lacked. And that is integrity.

For that and many other reasons I can only applaud *The Right Stuff* wholeheartedly. Rush to see it the moment it opens!

Starring: Sam Shepard (as Chuck Yeager), Barbara Hershey (Glenn's Yeager), Kim Stanley (Pancho Barnes), Donald Moffat (Lyndon B. Johnson), LeVar Helm (Jack Ridley), Scott Wilson (Scott Crossfield), Scott Glenn (Alan Shepard), Dennis Quaid (Gordon Cooper), Veronica Cartwright (Betty Grissom).

Written and Directed by Philip Kaufman. Photographed by Caleb Deschanel. Art director Dick Lawrence. Special effects directed by Ken Pepiot. Edited by Glenn Farr, Lisa Fruchtman, Samuel Douglas Stewart, Tom Roff and Steve Rotter. Music by Bill Conti. Produced by Irwin Winkler and Robert Chartoff.



Pictures: Chuck Yeager, played by Sam Shepard, after his X-15 rocket plane malfunctioned at 70,000 feet and he had to eject.

Easily the best of the recent rash of stereo-vision films, *Amityville 3-D* is as satisfying a scare-fest as you could wish to see. So what if its story owes more to *Poltergeist* than two previous *Amityville* films – under veteran director Richard Fleischer's* sure hand *Amityville 3-D* becomes an enjoyable roller-coaster ride that can't really be faulted in its desire to frighten. And it succeeds delightfully with first class 3-D effects that gradually build up to a fun all out attack on the senses.

After exposing a phony spiritualist set-up based in the infamous Long Island residence, "Reveal" reporter John Baxter (Tony Roberts) decides the *Amityville* history is just as bogus and buys the house at its usual steal of a price. Of course, almost immediately, strange manifestations take place resulting in numerous unexplained deaths amongst

AMITYVILLE 3-D

"A superior haunted house movie."

A Starburst Review
by Alan Jones

his work-mates and family. Before long Baxter has been convinced enough to let a parapsychology team move in for a night to see if they can record any concrete evidence. And so the way has been paved for the all stops out rip-roaring climax that ends by the gateway to hell found in the basement.

Plotting and pacing are of a pretty standard nature but where *Amityville 3-D* wins most points is in

Fleischer's creation of a creepy and claustrophobic atmosphere highlighted by the film's visual dimension. The opening shot is a long pan of the now familiar profile of the house itself which perfectly captures and establishes the mood of the picture. There are also a lot of throwaway moments, like the unexplained closing in of the bathroom walls that generate a growing terror.

So put on the glasses, sit back in your seat and relax, expect the unexpected and let *Amityville 3-D* wash all over you. I guarantee you won't be disappointed in the least by this superior haunted house movie that proves what an asset good 3-D can be if used correctly and in context.

*Interesting to note that Richard Fleischer is the only director to have made films in both 3-D booms. His other was *Arena* made in 1953.



What can you say about a comedy film in which the funniest joke is its 18 certificate?

On television Kenny Everett's video show is a mildly amusing hit and miss affair. But stretched out into a 92 minute feature, the punchlines are so painfully thin on the ground you feel you deserve some sort of prize for having sat through it all. Laugh? I never even started.

Bloodbath at the House of Death is nothing more than an excuse for Everett and his chums to indulge in sixth form high jinks and such lavatorial obviousness that makes even the lowest of the *Carry On's* look like masterpieces.

There's no story as such – just a series of desperate vignettes lampooning every fantasy film made in the last 10 years. Everything from *Carrie* through *Friday the 13th* to *E.T.* is dragged screaming into director Ray Cameron's and Barry Cryer's scenario. And even *The Entity* doesn't get off lightly either!

BLOODBATH AT THE HOUSE OF DEATH

"The punchlines are painfully thin on the ground."

A Starburst Film Review
by Alan Jones

Amid such purposely built cheap thrills, it's sad to see Vincent Price put in an appearance as 'the Sinister man'. In Everett's scheme of things, Price does nothing but talk dirty – something that is supposed to have us rolling in the aisles at such a devastatingly clever piece of playing against type. But by far the most embarrassing performance

comes from an uncomfortable Gareth Hunt as a gay scientist constantly leafing through male porno magazines.

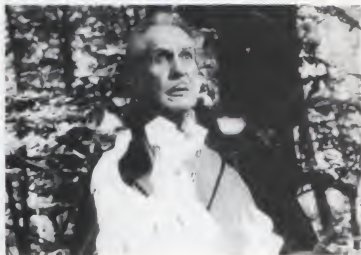
I don't quite know who is going to like *Bloodbath at the House of Death*. It plumbs depths hereto unknown even for Kenny Everett's mainstream admirers and is far too patronising for lovers of the horror/fantasy genre. It has all been done in the worst possible taste. Unfortunately,

Starring: Kenny Everett (as Dr Lucas Mandeville), Pamela Stevenson (Dr Barbara Coyle), Vincent Price (The Sinister Man), Sheila Steaphel (Sheila), John Fortune (John), Gareth Hunt (Elliott), Don Warrington (Stephen), John Stephen Hill (Henry), Cleo Rocos (Deborah).

Directed by Ray Cameron. Screenplay by Ray Cameron and Barry Cryer. Photographed by Dusty Miller and Brian West. Art direction by John Sunderland. Special effects by Ian Rowley. Edited by Brian Tagg. Produced by John Downes and Ray Cameron. Executive producers John Downes and Stuart D. Donaldson.

Time: 92 mins

Cert: 18



Top left and right: A pair of scenes from the Dino De Laurentiis version of the *Amityville* legend, this time around sporting the suffix of "3-D". Far left: Kenny Everett and Pamela Stevenson as they appear in *Bloodbath at the House of Death*. Right: A bewildered-looking Vincent Price from the same film.

Palace Video, in their quest for the unusual, have issued the cult curiosity *The Honeymoon Killers*, a flatly rendered but hypnotic account of the real-life murderers who were electrocuted at Sing Sing after disposing of several elderly victims (the details of the murders were harrowing in the cinema, less so on video). Much sharp black humour comes from the ill-assorted match of massive overweight nurse and henpecked gigolo, and the film's technique is often striking – camera movement being director Leonard Kastle's particular province. If you can cope with Shirley Stoler's rather two-dimensional performance, this is a video worth seeking out – another plus being the dramatic use of Mahler's sixth symphony as background score.

Brian De Palma's *The Fury* is available from 20th Century-Fox Video – and it's a curate's egg. Yes, there are the usual breathtaking demonstrations of film technique – such as a kidnapping that goes disastrously wrong, played out in heart-stopping slow motion; and there's a typically striking John Williams score (brilliantly used in the aforementioned sequence, where natural sounds are gradually replaced by strings and brass). But apart from Kirk Douglas's beleaguered father in pursuit of his tele-kinetic son, the characters are strictly cardboard, and plotting is just a matter of stringing one climax to the next. Still, De Palma remains Hitchcock's nearest heir-apparent – and *The Fury* should be seen.

RETURN OF JAMIE LEE

With so much that is excellent in the fantasy and horror genre available on video, it's regrettable that one can't really recommend the merely efficient (the money spent on video rental really mounts up!). And both *Dark Places* (Films International) and *Prom Night* (Embassy) are journeyman efforts, juggling a few well-worn formulae with none-too-startling results.

The former, a ghost story directed by the talented Don Sharp, has an excellent cast, led by Robert Hardy as the inheritor of the standard sinister haunted house, searching for a hidden fortune. He's manipulated by grasping neighbours Christopher Lee, Joan Collins and Herbert Lom – and finally possessed by the murderous spirit of the house's previous occupant (with predictable results). Performances are excellent, but the totally conventional result proves yet again that a director working at less than full steam cannot salvage ordinary material.

Paul Lynch's *Prom Night* is a straightforward cocktail: take two parts *Halloween* and one part each *Carrie* and *Saturday Night Fever*, stir not too violently – result: nothing too adventurous. Jamie Lee Curtis makes a far less affecting *Prom Queen* than Sissy Spacek, and why Leslie Nielsen

Video FILE

Tape Reviews by
Barry Forshaw



WE KID YOU NOT

another batch of "best and worst" courtesy of our resident video list compiler, Barry Forshaw. You are finding this useful, aren't you?



HITS

1. *Eyes Without A Face* (Intervision)
2. *Blood on Satan's Claw* (Guild)
3. *Charly* (Rank)
4. *A Study in Terror* (Intervision)
5. *Asylum* (Guild)

PITS

1. *The Bees* (Intervision)
2. *Corpse Grinders* (VCL)
3. *House of the Seven Corpses* (Derann)
4. *Legend of the Werewolf* (Rank)
5. *Headless Eyes* (Sapphire)

receives top billing is something only his agent can answer. One grudgingly concedes that this is probably a better Carpenter/De Palma clone than most – but the "Teenagers in Jeopardy from Masked Knife Wielder" genre is now so desperately moribund that only a really audacious talent could salvage it – perhaps a comeback film for Michael Powell?

DISAPPOINTING

Several things occur to one while watching *Seizure* (Astra Video). The first thought, sadly, is that the film simply doesn't sustain the menace generated in the opening reel. And as disappointment firmly sets in it becomes a game of "spot the plot source". There are monsters conjured from the repressed id of a central character (*Forbidden Planet*). And the recurring, cyclical nightmare from which a character cannot awake (*Dead of Night*). And the "hunt" game as in *Hounds of Zoroff*, etc. There are, unfortunately too many opportunities for such speculations, as tyro director Oliver Stone cannot shore up his fairly literate script with sufficient depth of characterization or suspense technique.

Jonathan Frid morosely plays a writer whose isolated home is invaded by three creatures who are simultaneously escaped lunatics (an overheard radio broadcast) or maleficent figures of ancient myth ("Kali, The Spider and The Executioner", proposes the writer's philosophical older friend – before literally losing his head). As the writer's family and guests are decimated, the occasional moment of tension is engendered – the crushing of a boorish financier's skull by a giant, mutilated negro demonstrates the effective use of sound rather than explicit visuals. But as virtually all the murders are offscreen, reticence is carried a little too far. And Martine Beswick's evil supernatural queen carries little of Barbara Steele's erotic authority. Two final points – camera crews should beware of shooting at mirrors (you'll see why); and the picture definition of the video is excellent.

TITLE SWITCH

If the plot, stars and director of *The Monster* (Rank Video) make you think of another film, that's because it is another film – 1975's *Don't Want to Be Born*. This latest example of video cameo deception is an uninspiring conflation of several films. Director Peter Sasdy, obviously having seen the very indifferent sequel to *Rosemary's Baby*, (*Look What's Happened to Rosemary's Baby*) decided to make an indifferent sequel of his own. This time, Joan Collins is an ex-stripper giving birth to more demonic offspring, with Eileen Atkins (rising far above her material) as a nun who performs the final protracted and unexciting exorcism. The film, set in a travelogue Lon-

don, is riddled with lacunae (how does the dwarf's initial curse take effect, for instance? Unlike Levin's carefully constructed original, no attempt is made at logical storycraft). The smaller parts (Atkins, Donald Pleasence) are nicely played, and the screenplay is frequently surprisingly witty. But the film is still further proof of Sasdy's unfulfilled promise after *Taste The Blood of Dracula*.

RETURN OF THE CAT FOLK

With any re-make of an established classic, comparisons may be odious, but they're inevitable. And it's further inevitable that Paul Schrader's new version of *Cat People* (CIC) will be better appreciated by those unfamiliar with the subtle, understated Val Lewton/Jacques Tourneur original made in the 40s. That was ahead of its time in positing the arousal of sexual desire in the heroine as the cause of her feline metamorphoses—in the 80s, of course, Nastassja Kinski's spectacular make-up effects occur post-coitally. And a brother has been added to the original scenario—one whose incestuous designs on his sister result from his knowledge of the fatal results for any lovers of the cursed siblings.

As with Phil Kaufman's re-make of Siegel's *Invasion of The Body Snatchers*, it's best (if possible) to try to forget the original. On its own terms, Schrader's version has several virtues—the performances of the limp-eyes Kinski and Malcolm McDowell as her tortured brother, the well-placed discretion of transformations and several blood-bolstered killings, the intelligent use of the New Orleans locales. But these, regrettably are undercut by Schrader's less than rigorous organisation of his material—several self-imposed cuts make the narrative choppy, and the prologue showing the pre-history of the Cat People really doesn't work. The director's well-known Calvinistic religious overtones here manifest themselves only indirectly—sexuality as the source of evil. Finally, a film that has sufficient incidental pleasures to outweigh its considerable flaws.

COMING

Now, an important part of this column—new releases! From Rank, a re-issue of Sherman's excellent *Death Line*, while VTC has *Mother's Day* and Borowczyk's *Blood Bath of Dr Jekyll*. The real big guns, however, are Thorn/EMI's *Superman III* and *Halloween III*. There's horror and SF from VTC with *The Outing* and 2019.

Opposite: Robin (Andrew Stevens) is wired for sound in *The Fury* (Fox). Top: The writer and the mutant in *Astra's Seizure*. Above: Nastassja Kinski and Malcolm McDowell in *The Cat People* (CIC). Right: Chris Reeve and his penetrating stare as seen in *Superman III* (Thorn/EMI).



BRIEF NOTES

capsule comments by starburst
video reviewer barry forshaw

NIGHT OF THE BLOODY APES (Iver) is the sort of film that the new stricter video censorship will make rare indeed. And while one can hardly shed any tears for Rene Cardona's dismal *Jekyll and Hyde* exploiter, watching it still reminds one that graphic bloodshed can remain a perfectly legitimate horror film ingredient—with no measurable "brutalising" effect on seasoned viewers.

SLUTHIS (Media Home Entertainment)—or *Spawn Of The Slithis*, as the title reads on the credits of the video, is a singularly uninspired reworking of Jack Arnold's excellent *Creature* movies. Come back, Ricou Browning...

TOWER OF EVIL (Iver) starts fairly promising with two fishermen finding evidence of bloody carnage on a lonely island. But Jim O'Connolly's film runs out of steam and never delivers the shocks mooted in the first reel.

It's interesting to finally catch *De Sade* (Rank) on video, as followers of Richard Matheson were denied the film by the British censor. But it looks mild stuff today, and has little interest for genre fans.

At the very bottom of the dustbin for *Psycho From Texas* (Apple Video)—the appalling Country 'n' Western score quickly signals that this dire rip-off (the cover of which hopefully invokes *Texas Chainsaw Massacre*) is real poverty row stuff. Performances cosmically bad, director (!) Jim Feazel.

In 1981 Danish Television came up with an idea to produce its first science fiction tv series. Unfortunately the story was so bad it was instantly rejected. It was almost a year later that the go-ahead was given to start work on a 13 part serial involving elaborate special effects and a format aimed at a younger audience. The writer for the series finally became its director and producer and thus *Crash*, as it was to be called, was born.

Telling the story of a small boy whose bedroom literally catapults him on a trip through time and space, the concept involved almost 500 miniature effects. British effects technician Bill Pearson (who has worked on *Doctor Who*, *Captain Zep*, *Blake's 7*, *Alien*, *Flash Gordon* and *Outland*) was contracted to assist co-producer Søren Buus. Buus, whose task it was to storyboard the script, visited the BBC visual effects department during the winter of 1982. Meeting up with Pearson he realised that here was the man most suited to executing the complex procedures necessary for such a series.

Pearson recalled that he was initially hired to work as a consultant for a period of one month. Six months later he had designed and built a majority of the hardware for the show. Working closely with Buus, Pearson describes their work as "a combination of extensive detailed working miniatures incorporating a riveted victorian appearance. A sort of Jules Verne meets *Thunderbirds*". Model construction took up to three months while the effects shots (all blue screen composites with at least three elements each) were completed in six weeks.

TV ZONE

by Richard Holliss



This page: A selection of behind the scenes photos from the Danish science fantasy television series, *Crash*. Special effects and models courtesy of Britain's own Bill Pearson.

Live actors were filmed in front of a blue screen with a remote camera simultaneously shooting the miniatures. Combination of the various elements was achieved with the aid of the *Ultimate* system, similar in design to the one used on Carl Sagan's *Cosmos*. "The wonderful thing about the system is that all sorts of effects are possible, columns of smoke for example, without fringing, a problem with regular blue screen techniques." Pearson also recalls the added advantage of shadows automatically cast by the actors on set. "It may take a long time to set up but the realism makes it all worthwhile."

Although the budget was small the enthusiasm and dedication of the crew meant that the series came in one schedule. Pearson found the work most rewarding. "At the BBC, I was a cross between a designer and assistant. Working with Søren I was able to make decisions as well as painting models, dirtying down the spacecraft and actually operating the *Ultimate*." On viewing some of the model work prepared for the series it's fascinating to note the wealth of detail incorporated into the miniatures. All the spaceships are modelled after animals. A spacestation resembles a spider and provides a home for the villain of the story, a Ming type character referred to as Sliak. The young boy, Birger, constantly finds himself fleeing from Sliak's nasty robot guards and the dreaded Dragon ships.

With the series starting on Denmark television this year, Pearson and Søren have high hopes that it will be picked up for International Distribution as soon as possible.

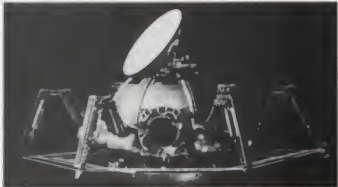


CRASH (1983)

Starring: Lars Ranthe, Anne Marie Helger, Peter Steen, Jeannie Mortensen, Jacob Christiansen, Ib Thykier, Torben Hundahl, Nils Skousen.

Produced and directed by Carsten Over-skov. Photographed by Svend Aage Madsen and Sejr Brockmann. Camera control unit Nils Lind and Bent C. Pedersen. Tape

technicians Lars Hybal and Birger Kadoed Sørensen, Model production design Søren Buus and Bill Pearson, Model assistants Herbert Christophersen, Niels Skovgaard, Jonathan Gress-Wright, Tanja Lauridsen and Simon Mathiasen, Computer graphics Birger Christensen, Technical coordinator Egon Andersen, Production assistant Birgit Jensen.



I know I usually only plug my own books, or those of my friends, in this column but today I'm going to make an exception and tell you about an excellent volume called "Adventures in the Screen Trade". It's by William Goldman and it's the best book about movie script-writing that I've ever read. Goldman is, of course, the man who wrote the screenplays for *Harper*, *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*, *Marathon Man*, *All the President's Men* and *The Stepford Wives*; he's also a novelist and has to his credit such titles as "No Way To Treat a Lady", "Marathon Man", "Tinsel", "Magic" and, most recently, the science fiction thriller "Control".

In this book Goldman gives you the low-down on the problems of working in Hollywood – and if you think that someone with his track-record in the film industry doesn't have problems any more then think again. On one level the book is a catalogue of frustrations: the frustrations of dealing with studio executives, producers, directors and stars. All these people have power over the script writer who has to stand there submissively while his work is changed out of all recognition. No matter how successful he may be, the Hollywood script writer has no real influence in the industry. He may be tolerated at the start of a project – someone has to write the screenplay – but from then on he's of less importance than the clapper boy. Goldman tells the story of going to a preview screening of one of the films he'd written. The PR man at the door asked him who he was. Goldman replied that he was writer. "Yeah, but what are you doing here?" asked the PR person.

One of my favourite chapters in the book deals with the making of *The Stepford Wives*. It begins with a fragment of conversation: "I think Nanette might be rather good for the part of Carol, don't you?" "She's a wonderful actress; I think she'd be fine." Goldman then writes: "That innocuous dialogue, spoken casually between myself and director Bryan Forbes marked the only time that I realized, early on before shooting, that a project I was involved in was more than likely doomed." Goldman's original idea was that the wives of Stepford would look like Playboy models who walk around the town in tight t-shirts and summer shorts but Nanette Newman's arrival on the scene meant that this concept had to be changed. Ms Newman is, of course, Bryan Forbes' wife and even in 1974, when the movie was made, was past the age where she could successfully impersonate a Playboy model.

It's Only A MOVIE

A Film Column by John Brosnan



Above: *The Stepford Wives* as they appeared in the Goldman scripted movie of the same title. Goldman's original idea was to have the wives look like Playboy Bunnies. Things didn't quite turn out the way he planned. Below: Goldman was also the original scripter for *The Right Stuff* but was removed from the project by director Phil Kaufman.



Writes Goldman: "Look, this movie is about insane men. Insane and so frightened of women; so panicked that their wives may begin to assert themselves, that they resort to murder. And if you are so insanely desperate, so obsessed with women being nothing but subordinate sex objects that you are willing to spend the rest of your days humping a piece of plastic... well, that plastic better goddam well be in the form of Bo Derek. You don't commit murder and make a new crea-

tion to have it look like Nanette Newman..."

And that's the reason why the *Stepford* wives, instead of wearing t-shirts and shorts, all wander around in the Connecticut summer in floor-length dresses and big-brimmed hats.

Goldman also describes the frustrations of working on a project for a long time only to be replaced in the end by another writer. His first experience of this was on *Charly* back in the late 1960s. He'd been hired by the actor Cliff Robertson to write the screenplay (based on the story by Daniel Keyes "Flowers for Algernon") but Robertson later rejected his work and had a new script written by Stirling Silliphant. More recently Goldman had a similar, but more painful, experience with *The Right Stuff*. He spent several months working on the screenplay but then director Phillip Kaufman got involved in the project, disagreed with Goldman's approach and rewrote the script himself.

Apart from a great deal of fascinating information about all the complicated manoeuvring that goes on before a movie ever reaches the production stage (and an amazing number fail to get there) Goldman also provides a lot of technical advice about the art of writing screenplays. He even shows you, with step-by-step examples, how he would go about turning one of his short stories into a script.

If you've ever entertained any ambitions about becoming a script writer then this is the book for you. And if you're just interested in behind-the-scenes movie gossip then this is also the book for you. (It will be published soon in hardcover by Macdonalds; a paperback version from Futura will follow later).

I wasn't surprised by the finding by magistrates in Yorkshire that Sam Raimi's *The Evil Dead* was obscene. It's a ridiculous verdict, of course, but one that I was expecting. I won't be surprised if the other 18-rated movies that are being prosecuted under the Obscene Publications Act, including *Xtro*, receive similar verdicts. But what is really interesting about all this is that here we have a situation where a film passed by the British Board of Film Censors has been found obscene in a British court. And even more ironically it's the BBFC which is going to be responsible for censoring the videos when the Video Recordings Bill becomes law around the middle of this year.

Will the BBFC give the video version of *Evil Dead* an '18' certificate when they get round to dolling out the certificates? I'll bet you they won't. I'll bet you, as I've said before, that a lot of horror films with either 'X' or '18' certificates are going to be forbidden as far as home viewing is concerned. I'll also bet you that the embarrassment that's been caused to the BBFC by the *Evil Dead* verdict will result in a move towards stricter film censorship in order to placate the Home Secretary.

Before long we'll have returned to the stage where, in 1953, the British censors gave an 'X' certificate to *Abbott and Costello Meet Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*.

BOOK WORLD

by Chris Charles

Three heavyweight novels this month, with *Floating Dragon* by Peter Straub (Fontana, £2.50), weighing in at the top of the list with 623 pages. I haven't actually read Straub before, but according to the blurb inside the book he's "acknowledged as a master magician with words – the Edgar Allan Poe of the Twentieth Century". This sort of hyperbole is to be expected when publishers have a best-selling author on their hands, and it's not surprising that *Floating Dragon* doesn't live up to such exorbitant claims.

The book concerns the haunting of a Connecticut town by the spirit of a long-dead man called Gideon Winter, who revisits the place to wreak vengeance on the descendants of the four men who killed him in the seventeenth century. His spirit takes over the body of an innocent person, and he's able to conjure up terrifying illusions which create all sorts of havoc and cause many deaths. He is aided in his campaign of destruction by the fact that an experimental gas has accidentally been released over the town which causes the afflicted persons' innards to turn to jelly: they

become "Leakers", held together only by their skins. But of the four people who are determined to resist Winter, two are able to communicate with each other telepathically and can also glimpse the future as well as the past.

I don't know about you, but all this seems a bit too convenient to me. Straub has a hotchpotch of ingredients here, and while he's a capable enough writer to tie them all together in a vaguely acceptable way, everything seems a bit cluttered and confusing. In the first hundred pages or so it's very hard to figure out what's going on as the story zooms from the past to the present to the future without so much as a by-your-leave. And when it finally settles down in time, the reader is then treated to a catalogue of weird apparitions, suicides, murders, and so on. This is fine up to a point, but when practically anything can happen, nothing is all that surprising. And this is the fundamental problem with the novel – it lacks its own internal logic. We never do discover why Gideon Winter was killed in the first place nor how he gained his remarkable powers of haunting. *Floating Dragon* had some nice ideas and some good set-pieces, but as a whole it's a mishmash.



Little, Big by John Crowley (Methuen, £1.95) is 538 pages of close-packed type which tells the story of Smoky Barnable, a young man who leaves a city and travels to Edgewood, where his girlfriend, Daily Alice, lives with her family. Edgewood, a large, labyrinthine house, is surrounded by the countryside and secluded from the outside world. Smoky is quickly captivated by it, not least because the inhabitants of the house seem attuned to a spirit world where fairies exist and animals are able to talk to humans. Years pass, and the outside world is wracked with wars and revolutions. Edgewood falls into disrepair, but finally Smoky discovers the secret of an orrery which functions as a generator, restoring the house to working order. And in the outside world the evil President who has taken over the country is defeated and banished. Smoky dies a happy man.

Little, Big is an unusual novel, a sophisticated fantasy by a superior writer which has drawn great praise from critics. Words like "masterpiece" have been used. This may indeed be an apt description of what is undoubtedly a finely wrought novel, but it's also the kind of book that tends to appeal only to the most refined tastes. I found the story rather slow-moving and even ponderous at times – almost because of the fine writing rather than in spite of it. I also had the feeling that the author was being deliberately elliptical at important points in the story while over-elaborating on the more mundane episodes. This is the sort of novel that inspires literary themes and weighty critical articles, and I'm not sure that this is altogether a good thing.

Far more rambunctious is *Satan* by Jeremy Leven (Granada, £2.50), the lightweight of the trio at a mere 527 pages. The *Satan* of the title is a computer who claims to be the Devil himself and who's being psychoanalyzed

by the hapless Sy Kassler, whose own life in the meantime is going from bad to worse to atrocious. His wife takes lovers, then leaves him, then sues him, then stops him from seeing his children; he loses his home and all his money and is finally fired from his job. All this probably sounds pretty grim – and so it is – but the story rattles along, with a bizarre cast of characters and some interesting discussions on everything from psychoanalysis to the meaning of life. There's a great deal of verve about the writing, even though Leven can be sloppy with his use of language and should have been edited properly. In the end, *Satan* is a less serious book than it pretends to be, the urge to tell a rattling good yarn swampy the more serious moral and philosophical points which it tries to make. But at least Leven has the virtue of being readable and of writing popular fiction with a bit of intellectual meat to it.

A more modest novel, at least in terms of page-count, is *The Steps of the Sun* by Walter Tevis (Gollancz, £7.95). Tevis is the author of *The Man Who Fell To Earth* and *Mockingbird*, both of which I enjoyed. But this new novel is a big disappointment. It's narrated by Ben Belson, a rich interstellar traveller who finds inner harmony in solitude on a planet of singing grass. Later he returns home with a shipload of uranium which will solve the Earth's energy problems and a perfect painkiller which has helped cure his morphine addiction. But political manoeuvring causes him to be declared a criminal and he is forced to take Chinese citizenship and spend some time as a male whore before everything is finally resolved in his favour. If all this sounds a bit improbable, that's just what it is. The whole novel seemed very contrived and slapdash to me. It manages to be both preposterous and dull, like a comedy without the humour.



Film Book WORLD

Reviews by Geoff Simm

In his original book *Cult Movies* (Vernilion Books, £7.95) Danny Peary went to immense trouble to provide a hundred ways to find the reel thing. The difference was a highly popular and successful encyclopedia-with-a-difference. *Cult Movies 2*, the sequel, is a study of only fifty films – “fifty more of the Classics, the Sleepers, the Weird and the Wonderful.” (Vernilion Books). The questions this book raises are: what constitutes a “cult” movie? And how many “cult” movies can there be before the elitist connotations of the word fail to apply? It also raises questions about Peary’s original choice of one hundred movies...

For example, Wilder’s *Some Like It Hot* – classic, or cult movie? – only appears in this second volume. So does *Dark Star*, which seems to have had a cult following since the year dot. And *A Clockwork Orange*? Aren’t Kubrick’s films always “cult” movies of one sort or another? Up to now, 2001, *A Space Odyssey* was the only one of cult merit. What about *Dr. Strangelove*? I ask myself. Surely the death of Peter Sellers elevated that to cult status, if it hadn’t already been a “cult” movie for years?

It’s possible, then, that ‘cultism’ is a subjective, a personal thing. One man’s cult movie is another man’s camp mistake. “I choose to define ‘cult movies’ quite broadly,” writes Danny Peary in his Foreword to his new book. “I consider them those special films that elicit a fiery passion in moviegoers long after their initial releases; that have been taken to heart as if they were abandoned orphans in an hostile world, cherished, protected, and enthusiastically championed by segments of the movie audience; that are integral parts of people’s lives...”

Peary goes on to explain omissions from the original book – space, of course, being the prime reason – and how *Cult Movies 2* contains chapters on fifty films that appeared repeatedly on lists submitted to him by readers suggesting titles that demanded inclusion should he do a sequel. He did. And very good it is, too.

Now, in all fairness, both volumes should grace your bookshelves, giving you a total of 150 cult movies (unless, of course, there’s Part Three,

in 3-D!). *Cult Movies 2* further celebrates Peary’s in-depth, informative, well-researched and enjoyable romance with the ten-reeler. He continues to give dates, credits, cast, a detailed synopsis, following these up with a pacey, at-length article. His writing is full of insight, obscure information and off-beat interpretation. It’s never dull and often hilarious. A genuine movie maniac writing with affection others of his ilk, fans and students of film alike.

THE SHAPE OF RAGE

Later in the year, The British Film Institute promises a season devoted to the films of David Cronenberg at London’s National Film Theatre. This, in itself, is indicative of how a genre film maker can be taken up by the intelligentsia and converted from low-budget horror-quickie director, into a cult auteur. Suddenly, Cronenberg’s *themes and vision* reflects oh-so-accurately the state of contemporary society...

Reaching our shores first, however, is *The Shape of Rage*, a publication of the Academy of Canadian Cinema. This turns out to be a collection of seven essays, plus an interview, edited by Piers Handling. The writers – for example, Robin Wood – are all critics who are doggedly setting out to “examine, explore and analyze” what Canada’s own Baron of Horror/Prince of Horror is saying to his audiences, via his explosive, disturbing and horrific movies, about the state of the world.

With section headings such as *The Visceral Mind*, *The Image As Virus* and *Cronenberg Tackles Dominant Videology* you might be forgiven for thinking that this narrow tome (on sale at £8.25, soft cover, with just over 200 pages) is a rather pompous, overly intelligent and heavily worded study of Cronenberg’s shockers. And you’d be right. It’s the sort of book which causes heads to explode. Especially if those heads belong to fans of the Cronenberg oeuvre. The book, in fact, seems to be aimed less at the fan than at those who might be doubtful of what Canada in general has to offer the world of international cinema. Robin Wood, in his essay, sums up what I mean, thusly:

‘It is interesting that Cronenberg’s

work has received so much critical attention and recognition during a period in which it is so alien to the cinema’s dominant trends: interesting because the vicissitudes of bourgeois criticism can generally be explained, not in terms of any “critical objectivity”, or set of established, time-hallowed aesthetic criteria, but in relation to the changing social climate. Why, in the age of Lucas and Spielberg, the age of a willing regression to infantilism, the age of reassurance and the “restoration of the Father” is Cronenberg – whose films seem to be the precise opposite of such a cinema – suddenly a name to be reckoned with?

Why indeed? Accept the challenge to find out. Hold on to your heads and read *The Shape of Rage*. It’s worth it for the interview and the filmography (up to date as of *The Dead Zone*).

PSYCHOTRONIC

The Psychotronic Encyclopedia of Film (phew!) by Michael Weldon (Ballantine Books, £12.95) celebrates thousands of movies often treated with indifference or contempt or, worse, ignored, by other movie guides. Some of these films were made so cheaply they fell apart after their sleazy premieres. Some were so heavily battered by the critics they limped away to die in a gutter before the reviewer’s ink was dry. But, thanks to anonymous gremlins who resuscitated these magic moments of celluloid, many of them are now considered classics or even “cult” films. Every single one of them can be rediscovered in Weldon’s book.

Psychotronic was the name Weldon gave to the magazine he produced in 1981, “New York’s weekly guide to television movies – especially forgotten junk.” The name, Weldon explains, “was originally meant to suggest a combination of weird horror films and electronic gadget-

filled science fiction movies. I thought I’d made it up, but it later turned out I’d stolen it from *The Psychotronic Man*, a Chicago-based film about a maniac barber who kills people with psychic energy.” (See page 589 for full entry). “After a while, I began to use the term ‘psychotronic’ as an adjective, to describe all the different kinds of movies that interest me... monster and science fiction films, of course. But exploitation films of any sort, really: biker movies, rock’n’roll movies, musclemen movies, 3-D movies, 60s beach movies, Mexican movies with subtitles...”

And that is a pretty good summing up of the contents of this vast, 800-plus page encyclopedia. Over 3,000 sometimes fabulously awful films are listed in alphabetical order, providing a wealth of information on many movies most of us have never even heard of. There is no star rating system. “If a film is especially good, bad, laughable, or boring we say so,” says Weldon. “Otherwise, we prefer to give you the facts and let you decide.”

As if this in itself isn’t a remarkable enough feat, *The Psychotronic Encyclopedia of Film* is littered with a wealth of rare illustrations, many culled from fifty years worth of bound volumes of the world-renowned *Middleton News* (!) an Ohio local newspaper. “I was allowed to clip out any movie ads or articles I wanted,” says Weldon. “That’s where a lot of the data in my files – and many of the illustrations I’ve used in *Psychotronic* – originally came from.”

The result, with apologies to *The Shape of Rage*, is mind-blowing!

The books above are all available from Forbidden Planet II, 58 St Giles High Street, London W.C.2. Postage and packing are extra. At the time of writing, due to the poor exchange rate, the prices of American imported books have not been fixed.



suppose it's all my fault! I had to solicit. Back in **Starburst 66** I asked for a few more of you to take pen in hand and send me some queries to answer. More than a few of you did just that. Trouble is, the questions were a little tougher than I would have liked. Luckily, I can choose which to answer and which not to. But this doesn't mean that I'll be ducking the issue. If I (or my **Starburst** colleagues) are unable to furnish information requested, I'll throw it open to the hordes of **Starburst** readers everywhere. As always, particularly meritorious additions will be rewarded in some cheap way. Let's start with a simple one.

THE LOST SOUNDTRACK

A heartfelt plea came my way from Miss K. White of Poole, Dorset. She's been having little luck laying her hands on a copy of the *Raiders of the Lost Ark* soundtrack. 'S'matter, K? Cat got your tongue? Why not just walk into any record shop (no really, any one!) and ask them to order it for you. Here, I'll make it easy for you. It's called *Raiders of the Lost Ark*. It's on Columbia Records and Tapes. The serial number is JS 37373. And if you can't cope with all that, I'll send you my copy for thirty quid, fair 'nuff?

CRONENBERG—THE OBSCURE STUFF

"In a recent American article on David Cronenberg's masterpiece, *Videodrome*," writes Gerald Haughton of *Irthlingborough*, "mention for an influence on this film was made of *The Victim*, supposedly a 1977 tv movie made by Cronenberg for the Canadian Broadcast Corp (CBC). Also names was *The Lie Chair*. Can you unearth any data on these two works and inform us

Starburst DATA BANK

Information from the filing cabinet of Dr Sally Gary

as to whether further works of Cronenberg lie undiscovered anywhere?"

Sure can, Gerry. Here's a complete run-down on Cronenberg's more obscure efforts I'm going to leave out *Shivers*, *Rabid*, *The Brood*, *Scanners*, *Videodrome* and *The Dead Zone*—you can look those up in any reference book).

Transfer (1966). Shot on 16mm in colour. Dir/Scr/Ph/Ed by David Cronenberg. Sound by Margaret Hindson/Stephen Nosko. Time: 7 mins. Amateur film. Starring: Mort Ritts and Rafe Macpherson.

From the Drain (1967). Shot on 16mm in colour. Dir/Scr/Ph/Ed by David Cronenberg. Time: 14 mins. Amateur film. Starring: Mort Ritts and Stephen Nosko.

Stereo (1969). Shot on 35mm in

B&W. Producer/Dir/Scr/Ph/Ed by David Cronenberg. Time: 63 mins. Production Company: Emergent Films. Starring: Ronald Mlodzik, Jack Messinger, Paul Mulholland, Iain Ewing, Arlene Mlodzik, Clara Meyer, Glenn McCauley. Narrated by Glenn McCauley/Mort Ritts.

Crimes of the Future (1970). Shot on 35mm in colour (as are the rest of the films in this list). Prod/Dir/Scr/Ed:

MAKING IT UP

Mark Coulier and Stuart Payne are both into makeup. Let me clarify that. Both are looking for a supplier of theatrical makeup, presumably to make themselves look uglier. (The possibilities for smart-alec remarks are endless—let me just savour this moment!) Now I know that London's "The Theatre Zoo" supply theatrical make-up. An enquiry

to them, accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope should produce a price list. They can be found at 28 New Row, London WC2. Might be worth mentioning in your letter that if they can't supply exactly the ingredients you're looking for, then they may be able to tell you who can.

Stuart was also wanting addresses of professional makeup men. Now, Stuart, you haven't been paying attention. I'm not going to say it again. **Starburst** does not give out addresses of professional film and tv folk. *EVER!!* If you want to send looney, begging or just plain fan letters to movie stars just go to your local library, ask the nice librarian for a copy of *Spotlight*, look up the name and address of the agent of the object of your affections and write to them. That's what they're there for. Just leave me, and **Starburst**, out of it.

GET THE PICTURE?

Several readers have written in to inquire where they can purchase stills of their favourite sf and horror stars. In fact, the **Starburst** offices receives several enquiries along these lines every week. So for all those folks, and for Sarah Bateman of Cricklewood in particular, here's the answer to all your prayers. There's a new outfit just been set up to specialise in stills from fantasy films. The people behind it are old hands at this sort of thing, so you'll be in safe hands. If you send them a large stamped addressed envelope, they'll send you by return mail, an illustrated catalogue (their first). You can write to them at "Forbidden Worlds", 4 Ravenslea Road, London SW12. Don't forget to tell them I sent you, I need all the goodwill I can get.

That's quite enough "Where Can I Get..." type questions for one month. Now let's get down to some queries about fantasy films (any one here remember those?)

A free film poster to the first reader who correctly identifies this still. Postcards please to the Data Bank address.



David Cronenberg. Time: 63 mins. Prod Co: Emergent Films. Starring: Ronald Mlodzik, Lon Lidolt, Tania Zolty, Paul Mulholland, Jack Messenger, Iain Ewing, William Haslam, Ray Woodley, Rafe Macpherson.

Tourettes/Letter from Michelangelo/Jim Ritchie Sculptor (1971). Three fillers for tv made while Cronenberg was living in France.

Don Valley/Fort York/Lakeshore/Winter Garden/Scarborough Bluffs/In the Dirt (1972). Six fillers made on Cronenberg's return to Canada.

Secret Weapons (1972). 30 minute segment for CBC tv series *Program X*. Dir: David Cronenberg. Scr: Norman Snider. Assoc prod: George Jonas. Exec prod: Paddy Sampson. Starring: Barbara O'Kelly (motorcycle gang leader), Norman Snider (the scientist), Vernon Chapman (the bureaucrat), Lister Sinclair (narrator).

The Victim (1976). 30 minute segment for the CBC tv series *Peep Show*. Dir: David Cronenberg. Scr: Ty Haller. Prod: Deborah Peaker. Starring: Janet Wright (Lucy), Jonathan Welsh (Donald), Cedrick Smith (man on park bench).

The Lie Chair (1976). 30 minute segment for the CBC tv series *Peep Show*. Dir: David Cronenberg. Scr: David Cole. Prod: Eoin Sprott. Starring: Richard Monette (Neil), Susan Hogan (Carol), Amelia Hall (Mildred), Doris Petrie (Mrs Rogers).

The Italian Machine (1976). 30 minute segment for the CBC tv series *Teletype*. Dir/Scr: David Cronenberg. Prod: Stephen Patrick. Starring: Gary McKeehan (Lionel), Frank Moore (Fred), Hardee Linehan (Bug), Chuck Shamata (Reinhardt), Louis Negin (Mouette), Toby Tarnow (Lana), Geza Kovacs (Ricardo), Cedric Smith (Luke).

Fast Company (1979). Feature film. Dir: David Cronenberg. Scr: Phil Savath/Courtney Smith/David Cronenberg from a story by Alan Treen. Prod: Michael Lebowitz/Peter O'Brien/Courtney Smith. Prod Co: Michael Lebowitz Inc. Time: 91 mins. Starring: Michael Smith (Lonnie Johnson), Claudia Jennings (Sammy), John Saxon (Phil Adamson), Nicholas Campbell (Billie Brooker), Cedric Smith (Gary Black), Judy Foster (Candy), George Buza (Meatball).

Does that help?

TO LOVE YUTTE

Peter Harris dropped me a line to supplement one of my answers in *Data Bank* for *Starburst 66*. He tells me that *To Love a Vampire* was the American release title for *Lust for a Vampire* (you're right, Pete, and I hang my head in shame). But there's worse to come. Apparently, the *Twins of Evil* still featured in that column was miscaptioned. In the picture Madeleine Collinson was menacing Luan Peters (as Gerta) not Kathleen Byron as we claimed. Oops!

But what bothers me most is that



Above: Especially for reader Peter Harris, a big Yutte Stensgaardie fan from way back, here's a picture of the lady, busy in a clinch with Richard Lestrang (played by Michael Johnson) in *Lust for a Vampire*. This pic's from the personal collection of Ye Editor... he's just as bad as you are, Pete. Below: Another request, this time from Shaun Radley, who wanted to see a picture of Jamie Lee Curtis. This is Jamie as she appeared in John Lendl's *Trading Places*.



Peter, here, was the only one to spot that boo-boo. Rest of you asleep or something?

"Now that I've annoyed you," continues Mr Harris (not at all, Pete!), "I've probably jeopardised my chances of having my request granted. Have you any more stills of Yutte Stensgaard like the one on page 47 and has she made any other movies apart from *Lust*? Also are they available on 8mm or video?"

Peter, you sly dog, you want us to print another picture of the scantily-clad form of Yutte? You'll go blind - ah well, they're your eyes.

As for Yutte on video, this is more Barry Forshaw's province than mine, but I'm sure he won't mind this once. I couldn't find anything for Ms Stensgaard after *Lust for a Vampire* (coincidentally available on video through Thorn/EMI catalogue number TVC 90 0275 2/TVX 90 0275 4) but I did manage on film credit before for a deservedly obscure 1969 offering called *Zeta One*. Directed by Michael Cort, it was about an extra-terrestrial race of super-women (guess what Yutte played in that?) and starred James Robertson Justice and Charles Hawtrey. Sounds just terrible, doesn't it? I wasn't able to track down a video release of that turkey, but that doesn't mean it's available... can any one out there tell us one way or the other?

JAMIE LEE CURTIS...

Shaun Radley has just seen Jamie Lee Curtis in *Trading Places* and wants some info on the lady as well as her planned future projects and a pic. Looking to the future first, Shaun, I sure don't know anything she had planned beyond the role in *My Love Letters*. *Starburst* did publish Tony Crawley's interview with her way back in issue 46 (you could probably get that one as a back issue from Perfect Mailing Company, 19f Spital Road, Maldon, Essex). No point in regurgitating any of that, so I'll just do a quick filmography: *Halloween* (78), *Terror Train* (79), *The Fog* (79), *Prom Night* (80), *Halloween 2* (82), *Road Games* (82), *Trading Places* (83). I also remember that Jamie Lee starred in a tv movie version of *The Dorothy Stratten Story*, same subject matter as Bob Fosse's current *Star 80*, televised shortly after Stratten's tragic murder. Any one expand on this list?

That's about all we have room for this time. Keep those questions coming, without them I'll starve - and you wouldn't want that to happen, would you?

Send all your questions on Fantasy tv and cinema to: *Starburst Data Bank*, *Starburst magazine*, *Marvel Comics Ltd*, 23 Redan Place, London W2 4SA, United Kingdom.



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